The Dissertation Committee for Aarti Bhalodia-Dhanani
certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Princes, Diwans and Merchants:
Education and Reform in Colonial India

Committee:

_____
Gail Minault, Supervisor

_____
Cynthia Talbot

_____
William Roger Louis

_____
Janet Davis

_____
Douglas Haynes

Princes, Diwans and Merchants:
Education and Reform in Colonial India

by

Aarti Bhalodia-Dhanani, B.A.; M.A.

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2012

For my parents

Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without help from mentors, friends and family. I want to start by thanking my advisor Gail Minault for providing feedback and encouragement through the research and writing process. Cynthia Talbot's comments have helped me in presenting my research to a wider audience and polishing my work. Gail Minault, Cynthia Talbot and William Roger Louis have been instrumental in my development as a historian since the earliest days of graduate school. I want to thank Janet Davis and Douglas Haynes for agreeing to serve on my committee. I am especially grateful to Doug Haynes as he has provided valuable feedback and guided my project despite having no affiliation with the University of Texas.

I want to thank the History Department at UT-Austin for a graduate fellowship that facilitated by research trips to the United Kingdom and India. The Dora Bonham research and travel grant helped me carry out my pre-dissertation research. The Institute of Historical Studies at UT provided me with a writing fellowship. Marilyn Lehman, the graduate coordinator, ensured that I had the required paper work to meet all deadlines, especially when I was away from Austin. I want to thank the organizers of the 38th Annual Conference on South Asia, the 3rd Biennial Gujarat Studies Association Conference, and the Women Faculty Research Day at Tulane University for allowing me to present my research. Over the years members of the Gujarat Studies Group have

helped in locating source material and people in India and the United Kingdom. I want to thank the listserv moderator Samira Sheikh for providing vital service by connecting often isolated researchers.

In India I want to start by thanking Virendrasinh Jadeja of Gondal. He ensured that I got complete access to the Navlakha palace's private library. Since the beginning, Virendrasinh as well as Jay Vasavda of Gondal have taken a keen interest in my topic and helped in finding relevant material, including photographs and maps. The Late Maharaja Kumar Shivrajsinhji, son of Maharaja Bhojrajji (the last Maharaja of Gondal) and grandson of Maharaja Bhagvatsinhji, sat down with me one afternoon and patiently answered my questions about Gondal, Bhagvatsinh and princely education. Hasmukhbhai Vyas of Dhoraji shared with me his collection on Gondal state.

Drs. Makrand Mehta, Shirin Mehta, S.V. Jani, P.G. Korat, Kalpa Manek and Pradyuman Khachar shared their knowledge of Gujarat with me. I want to thank all of them for taking the time to meet with me, in some instances on multiple occasions. As current and retired faculty at various universities across Gujarat they made me aware of ongoing research on princely states in Saurashtra and colonial Gujarat. Jayantbhai Meghani in Bhavnagar lent me books from his collection. Pushpaben, Principal of the Arya Kanya Gurukul, Porbandar, provided me with material on the school and its illustrious founder, Shri Nanji Kalidas Mehta.

Staff at the Bhagvatsinhji library in Gondal, Barton and Gandhi Smriti libraries in Bhavnagar, Lang library in Rajkot, BJ Institute and Gujarat Vidyapith libraries in

Ahmedabad, University of Bombay library, and British Library in London assisted me in finding material for my project. Staff at the National Archives of India, Maharashtra State Archives and various branches of the Gujarat State Archives – Gandhinagar, Rajkot, Bhavnagar, Junagadh and Porbandar – did their best to help a time constrained researcher from out of town.

I want to thank my family, immediate and extended, for their interest and encouragement. Nilesh and Kina Dedania welcomed me into their home in New Delhi and gave me a place to stay. I have fond memories of conducting research in London, primarily because of my brother and sister-in-law. My husband has always supported me in my academic pursuits. He was there to encourage me when my spirits were down or when I hit a roadblock. Above all, I would like to thank my parents to whom my work is dedicated. They instilled in me discipline, willingness to work hard, and courage to take the road less traveled.

Princes, Diwans and Merchants:
Education and Reform in Colonial India

Aarti Bhalodia-Dhanani, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2012

Supervisor: Gail Minault

Scholarship on education and social reform has studied how communities with a history of literacy and employment in pre-colonial state administrations adjusted to the new socio-political order brought about by the British Empire in India. My work shifts the attention to the Indian aristocracy and mercantile communities and examines why they promoted modern education. I argue that rulers of Indian states adapted to the colonial environment quite effectively. Instead of a break from the past, traditional ideas of *rajadharma* (duties of a king) evolved and made room for reformist social and economic policies. This dissertation examines why many Indian princes (kings and queens) adopted liberal policies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I argue that English-educated rulers of Indian states became reformers and modernizers to enhance their monarchical authority. The main audience for princes was their own state population, neighboring princes, imperial officials, and Indian journalists and politicians.

I have carried out research at government archives and public and private libraries in India and the United Kingdom. Sources used include official records and correspondence, annual administrative reports, newspaper accounts, social reform journals, and weeklies and monthlies dedicated to educational topics. I have also consulted memoirs and biographies of kings, queens, *diwans* (prime ministers) and merchants. My source material is in English and Gujarati. I draw evidence from princely states across India with a focus on Hindu Rajput and Pathan Muslim states in the Gujarat (specifically Saurashtra) region of western India, neighboring the former Bombay Presidency. Due to Gujarat's strong mercantilist tradition, commercial groups played an influential role in society. I examine how and why merchants in princely states supported their ruler's educational policies. I also discuss how mercantile philanthropy crossed political and religious boundaries with the Gujarati (Hindu, Muslim and Jain) diaspora across India, Africa and Burma supporting educational institutions in Gujarat. My dissertation examines the interactions between the English-educated upper caste Hindus, the Anglicized Rajput rulers and the Gujarati merchants to understand how they all contributed to the shaping of modern Gujarati society.

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

Edu Dept	Education Department
F & P	Foreign and Political Department
GSA	Gujarat State Archives, Gandhinagar
GSA-J	Gujarat State Archives, Junagadh
GSA-R	Gujarat State Archives, Rajkot
MSA	Maharashtra State Archives, Bombay
NAI	National Archives of India, New Delhi
RNP	Report on Native Newspapers
WISA	Western India States Agency

Imperial Honors

GCSI	Knight Grand Commander of the Order of the Star of India
GCIE	Knight Grand Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire
KCSI	Knight Commander of the Order of the Star of India
KCIE	Knight Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire
CSI	Companion of the Order of the Star of India
CIE	Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire
CI	Companion of the Order of the Crown of India

List of Maps

List of Figures

Introduction

While many parts of India were consumed by the fires of the 1857 uprising, Diwan Gaorishankar Oza (1805-1891) of Bhavnagar started the first girls' school in his state that year. A festive procession carrying the six year old princess Kumari Gaguba, daughter of Raja Jaswantsinh (r. 1854-70), the ruler of Bhavnagar state, originated from the *darbargadh* (royal palace) and made its way to the school on inauguration day. The procession ran through the heart of the city with Gaguba as the guest of honor. Contemporary accounts describe the procession as a grand event, equivalent to some of the biggest festivals the city had ever seen.[1] Ritualized processions were traditionally carried out to celebrate inauguration of a new king, royal weddings or births, victory after war and religious festivals. But a procession to celebrate the inauguration of a school for girls was a new event. Oza, the Prime Minister, knowingly took the radical step of taking a respected traditional practice and adapting it for a "scandalous" modern agenda, formal education for girls. The creative combination of the traditional and the modern is a running theme through this dissertation, just as it was for social reform movements in nineteenth-century India.

The reader might ask why inauguration of the girls' school was such a grand event. Why was there a procession? Why did the ceremonies begin at the palace and

[1] K.V. Mehta, *Gaurishankar Udaishankar Oza, emnu Jivan Charitra* (Bombay: Times of India Press, 1903), p. 306-9; Javerilal Umiashankar Yagnik, *Gaorishankar Udayashankar* (Bhavnagar: 1937 second edition), p. 47-50.

involve the child princess? Oza deliberately made the opening of the first girls' school in Bhavnagar a public and festive event. A procession to celebrate modern education was a novel occurrence and it caught the city's attention. Similar to the mutineers and rebels of 1857, Oza was also waging a war; a war against culture and religion that frowned upon female education. In his biography of Oza, K. V. Mehta refers to the above-mentioned events as a *yudh* (war) between Oza's reformist ideas and superstitions prevalent in society.[2] In a separate biography, Yagnik states that opening the first school for girls was the most arduous of all the tasks Oza undertook in his capacity as the Diwan.[3] In mid-nineteenth century, education for girls was such a taboo that many upper caste Hindus equated an educated girl with the curse of early widowhood. Not only did most parents refuse to educate their daughters, there was also a significant risk of society ostracizing the select few families who did. In starting the first school for girls Oza faced many hurdles and a conspicuous procession was his approach to silencing the opposition. The public procession symbolized the Raja and Rani's support for the new girls' school.

Support from the Raja and Rani was actually the last stage in Oza's grand plan to start the school. Oza started his mission by working to build a consensus among his own Nagar Brahman community. Vadnagara or Nagar Brahmans were a traditionally literate upper caste whose members lived across Gujarat. Nagar Brahmans held important positions in Gujarat during the Mughal era due to their knowledge of Persian.[4] With the

---

[2] K.V. Mehta, *Gaurishankar Udaishankar Oza*, p. 306.

[3] Yagnik, *Gaorishankar Udayashankar*, p. 48.

[4] Ranchodji Amarji, *Tarikh-i-Sorath: A History of the Provinces of Sorath and Halar in Kathiawad* (Bombay: Education Society Press and Thacker & Co., 1882), p. 26-27, 33. Amarji, the Nagar

arrival of the English East India Company Nagars switched to learning English and effectively transitioned from working for the Mughals to the princely states and the colonial government. Diwans of Bhavnagar for almost a century – Parmanandas Mehta, Gaorishankar Oza, Samaldas Mehta and Sir Prabhashankar Pattani – belonged to the Nagar Brahman caste. At first Oza faced opposition from members of his own extended family. Over time he prevailed and sent his two daughters aged eight and ten along with eight other Nagar Brahman girls to the school located in a building adjacent to his house. Oza's nephew Samaldas Parmanandas Mehta, Diwan of Bhavnagar from 1878-84, also sent girls from his family.[5] I will explain in chapters 2 and 5 why there was a sudden increase in interest for girls' education among traditionally literate communities such as Nagar Brahmans during the mid-late nineteenth century.

On winning the support of the Nagar Brahmans, Oza went to the leading merchants of the city and convinced them to show their support for female education by sending their daughters to school. With mercantile support, the school's enrollment increased to twenty-five students.[6] Oza now had the support of his own caste and leading merchants, but opposition to his girls' school was so strong that he needed to enlist another powerful supporter. Oza went to the Gohil Rajput ruler of Bhavnagar, Raja Jaswantsinh, and requested that the six year old princess, Kumari Gaguba, attend the

---

Brahman Diwan of Junagadh wrote *Tarikh-i-Sorath* in Persian in 1825. Under James Burgess's initiative E. Rehatsek and Colonel J.W. Watson wrote an English translation from two Persian and one English (derived from a Gujarati version) manuscript of the *Tarikh-i-Sorath*. The Junagadh and Bhavnagar Princes patronized the translation project that resulted in the 1882 English version that I have used.

[5] K.V. Mehta, *Gaurishankar Udaishankar Oza*, p. 304.

[6] Ibid., p. 306-9.

inauguration ceremonies. Jaswantsinh readily agreed but the Rani required more convincing. In the end, Oza managed to get the consent of both the parents. The Brahman Oza convinced the Rajput Raja and Rani that support by the royal family was imperative in promoting education for girls and removing superstitions associated with literate females.

In order to complete the task of supporting female education successfully, even the powerful Diwan needed the help of the elite of the city of Bhavnagar. To combat opposition to girl's education from orthodox members of the population, Oza formed a coalition that included the most powerful groups in the city: Nagar Brahmans, merchants and the royal family. This case study of Bhavnagar, which I will examine in greater detail in chapter 2, shows us that the promotion of education in Gujarat from its earliest days was a multi-class project where different prominent social groups responded to local needs while drawing ideas from the wider global sphere. The above example also highlights the interdependent relationship between elites in Gujarati society and the influence of mercantile communities in the development of modern Gujarat. My work studies the effect of reformist ideas on Gujarat's dominant mercantile communities, a heavily understudied topic.

The Gujarati merchants I study belonged to various castes and religions. The Hindu merchants are Vaishnav Vanias, Bhatias and Lohanas. Members of these three castes tended to follow Vallabhacharya sect of Vaishnav Hinduism. Gujarati Muslims involved in trade included the Bohras, Khojas and Memons. Muslim trading communities

were descendants of converts from Hindu castes and retained many of their pre-Islamic customs. For traders and merchants the most relevant custom was transmission of inheritance from father to son while excluding daughters. This practice facilitated accumulation of capital along agnatic patrilineal lines and was followed by Hindu, Jain and Muslim merchants.[7] Structurally the Gujarati Muslim and Jain trading communities had (and still have) many similarities to Hindu sub-castes (*jnati*). Gujarati Muslims had sect-specific *jamats* which acted similar to a *jnati panchayat* (caste council) in regulating behavior of their members. For Hindus, Jains and Muslims, the family was the primary unit around which business was built followed by the *jnati* (sub-caste or sect). Since the family was the building block for all Gujarati trading communities, the commercial and socio-cultural world of the merchant overlapped and a negative mark in either of the two domains affected the other. Mercantile philanthropy developed from such a cultural environment where it was the merchant's duty to support charitable causes in his city. My dissertation will examine why merchants, who did not come from traditionally literate backgrounds, were interested in promoting education in Gujarat. I will discuss how mercantile culture changed in late nineteenth century under the influence of social reformers, English-educated Indian rulers and the British presence.

I draw evidence from princely states across India with a focus on Hindu Rajput and Pathan Muslim states in the Gujarat (specifically Saurashtra) region of western India, neighboring the former Bombay Presidency. The premier princely state of Saurashtra

[7] S.C. Misra, *Muslim Communities in Gujarat* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1964), p. 70-74; S.A.I. Tirmizi, "Muslim Merchants of Medieval Gujarat," in *Business Communities of India: A Historical Perspective*, ed. Dwijendra Tripathi (Ahmedabad: Manohar, 1984), p. 63-65.

(also known as Kathiawad), Junagadh, was ruled by a Babi Pathan dynasty. The rest of the princely states studied in this dissertation: Bhavnagar, Gondal and Nawanagar (Jamnagar) had Gohil and Jadeja Rajput rulers. In each chapter I will frequently cross the border lines between Princely and British India, highlighting the fluid nature of the political boundaries. My work draws attention to the flexible boundaries between Princely and British India as money and ideas flowed easily between them. The princely states of Gujarat had an extensive diaspora stretching from Bombay to Burma (Myanmar) and East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Zanzibar) to South Africa. The diaspora contributed towards building of schools, orphanages, homes for widows and hospitals in their places of origin; thus connecting Princely India to British India and the world around the Indian Ocean.

Historiography on Gujarat during the colonial era focuses on areas under direct British rule, especially the cities of Surat and Ahmedabad. Through my work I want to connect Princely Gujarat to British Gujarat and get a better understanding of the state's history. The Saurashtra region of Gujarat is heavily understudied and this dissertation is an attempt at bringing material from the former princely states in dialogue with scholarship on Ahmedabad and Surat. In order to understand the history and culture of the region, we need to pay attention to Saurashtra instead of just focusing on Eastern Gujarat. Over the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, more than half of present day Gujarat State was under princely rule. Though Gujarat and neighboring Rajputana were unusual in being almost exclusively under the rule of Indian kings and

queens, the rest of South Asia was also covered with Indian-ruled territories during the colonial era. The 1909 *Imperial Gazetteer of India* listed 693 princely states. The *Report of the Indian States Committee* in 1929 reduced the number to 562 as it excluded states in Nepal and Burma.[8] No matter what number we use the important point is that one-third of South Asia consisted of princely states and was under indirect British rule. Hence, the former princely states require more scholarly attention.

Earlier scholarship has brought the histories of princely states in dialogue with colonial South Asia by focusing on Indian-ruled territories during the final decades of the British Raj.[9] These monographs and articles add to the historiography of South Asia and decolonization by examining the dismantling of the princely states and their quick merger with independent India and Pakistan. My dissertation continues this trend by crossing over the imperial boundary and understanding how Indian kings and queens adapted to the colonial era. My research focuses on princely states with the aim to show their rulers as figures of historical importance, as actors whose actions and policies left an impact on their territories.[10] Scholars studying princely states often view them through the lens of

---

[8] Barbara N. Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 2

[9] Ian Copland, *The Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire 1917-1947* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Barbara N. Ramusack, *The Princes of India in the Twilight of Empire: Dissolution of a Patron Client System, 1914-1939* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1978); Stephen Ashton, *British Policy towards the Indian States 1905-1939* (London: Curzon Press, 1982).

[10] Other recent scholarship focusing on princely India include Siobhan Lambert-Hurley, *Muslim Women, Reform and Princely Patronage* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Manu Bhagavan, *Sovereign Spheres: Princes, Education and Empire in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003); Chitralekha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Rights, and the History of Kashmir* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Dick Kooiman, *Communalism and*

indirect British rule or informal Empire, emphasizing their subordinate status to the colonial Government of India.[11] I move the discussion towards princely motivations and argue that rulers of Indian states adapted to the colonial environment quite effectively. Indian nationalists often accused the princes of being "puppets" of the British. I argue that this is not a fair characterization of the 562 princely states. The princely concept of *rajadharma* (duties of a king) evolved in response to ongoing changes within princely territories and British India. Successful adaptation to the new kingly culture by many princely states shows us that they were far from "hollow crowns."[12]

The dissertation examines why many Indian princes adopted liberal policies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I argue that English-educated rulers of Indian states became reformers and modernizers to enhance their monarchical authority. By adopting a reform agenda princes reinvented themselves to adjust to a new socio-political climate that often viewed them as relics of the past. With external policies including defense, communications and foreign relations under British control, Indian princes had jurisdiction over only internal matters. In such an environment princes set forward a domestic agenda of education and reform to assert their sovereignty and

---

Indian Princely States: Travancore, Baroda and Hyderabad in the 1930s (Delhi: Manohar, 2002); Janaki Nair, *Miners and Millhands: Work, Culture, and Politics in Princely Mysore* (London: Sage, 1998).

[11] Michael Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India: Residents and the Residency System, 1764-1858* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Ian Copland, *The British Raj and the Indian Princes: Paramountcy in Western India, 1857-1930* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1982); John Mcleod, *Sovereignty, Power, Control: Politics in the States of Western India, 1916-1947* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1999); Robert Stern, *The Cat and the Lion: Jaipur State in the British Raj* (Leiden: Brill, 1988).

[12] Nicholas Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). In his study of the kingdom of Pudukkottai in south India, Dirks argues that Indian princely states exercised no influence over their subjects nor did they have any bargaining power with the imperial government.

relevance. We will see how princes went from being heads of a military machine to trustees of their people overseeing development of roads, railways, schools and hospitals. State budgets by the end of nineteenth century apportioned significant amounts to public works and civic causes. Yet, Indian rulers during the colonial era continued to perform traditional acts of *rajadharma* such as patronizing religious institutions, art, architecture, classical dance and music, while also supporting educational institutions, hospitals, libraries, museums and modernizing their bureaucracy. *Rajadharma* evolved and made room for liberal social and economic policies.

The main audience for reformist princes was their own state population, neighboring princes, imperial officials, and Indian journalists and politicians. Through case studies of Baroda and Mysore states, Manu Bhagavan has shown how Indian princes opened universities in their home states to decolonize higher education.[13] In this project the princes received support from their people, and as a result there was a state-based populist definition of good government. These states became "model states" not because the British judged them as so but because of appreciation from their own population. I agree with Bhagavan that many princes were receptive to the demands made by powerful groups within their states. My work shows that due to an increasing interest in modern education from the traditionally literate castes, princes and *diwans* (prime ministers) opened schools across their states. In chapter 3 I will explain how the desire to have a formally educated bureaucracy led to opening of colleges in the princely states of

[13] Bhagavan, *Sovereign Spheres*.

Bhavnagar and Junagadh. In the case of Bhavnagar, the Rajput-ruled state started the first college in Saurashtra, Samaldas College in 1885, despite lack of support from the Bombay government. Bhavnagar state's decision was in response to local need for an institution of higher learning that would prepare men aspiring for careers in administration in Princely or British India. A few years later Muslim-ruled Junagadh, the premier princely state in Saurashtra, started the Bahauddin College for similar reasons.

Scholarship on education and social reform has studied how communities with a history of literacy and employment in pre-colonial state administrations adjusted to the new socio-political order brought about by the British Empire in India.[14] By studying how princes adapted to British imperial rule, my dissertation aims to link literature on colonial India with my research on princely states. In chapter 4 I will examine Prince Bhagvatsinh (1865-1944) of Gondal who used his Rajkumar College (the "Eton of India") education to build a school for *grasias* (feudal aristocracy). With the dismantling of princely state armies, formerly militarized people such as the *grasias* turned to outlawry or asked for more land grants from the ruler. Through the Grasia College Bhagvatsinh aimed to give them an education that would prepare them for employment not traditional to their communities. Bhagvatsinh's upbringing at the Rajkumar College led him to believe that a liberal education would result in political stability. Bhagvatsinh

[14] Gail Minault, *Secluded Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999); David Kopf, *The Brahmo Samaj and the Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1982); David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

also demanded and won absolute control over his education department from the colonial government. Obtaining sole authority to set education policy in Gondal and overseeing education for *grasias* were attempts by Bhagvatsinh to assert his sovereignty.

Bhagvatsinh strongly believed that a good education was one that uplifted people from their "ignorant" and "backward" state and helped them adjust to modernity. Bhagvatsinh along with reformers of his generation used the same rationale when it came to women's education. Reformist philosophies that guided education for lower classes and women were remarkably similar, as they originated from a similar concern over "backward" people. In chapter 5, I will examine Bhagvatsinh's education policy towards women, and the role played by women of the royal family in promoting female education. Bhagvatsinh was of a similar mindset as other social reformers in that he was deeply concerned about the position of women in Indian society. Hindu and Muslim reformers hoped that improving the status of women would bring about a national revival. Locating women as the grounds for revival of the community, be it along caste, religion, or national lines, was an idea widespread across India.[15] The goal of both Hindu and Muslim social reform was to educate not just men but also women as both needed to be uplifted in order to ensure the regeneration of their community.

Rammohan Roy (1772-1833), often referred to as the "father of modern India," argued that women's enlightenment was the answer to lifting India from its "degenerate state." This belief resulted in reformers across the spectrum encouraging the spread of

[15] Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Minault, *Secluded Scholars*.

literacy among women. Social reform and women's education were part of the modernizing process with male reformers expecting their women to cultivate certain characteristics which were regarded in the reformist sphere as progressive and thus help Indians shed the "degenerate" and "backward" label given by Europeans. The "woman question" was not about what women wanted, but how they could be modernized. In chapters 2, 5 and 6, I will highlight the gendered nature of social reform in colonial India and will discuss how and why various castes and religious sects adopted the idea that educated women were integral to the betterment of one's community and nation.

Historiography on social reform emphasizes the desire on part of Indians to adapt to the new social milieu produced during colonial rule while retaining their Indianness. The Brahmo Samaj (founded in 1829), the Arya Samaj (founded in 1875), the Deoband Madrasah (founded in 1867), and many other social and religious reform movements allowed Indians to work with the colonial administration and continue to be respected members of their caste or religious community. Reform movements gave Indians an opportunity to interact with the British Empire without being ostracized. Scholarship on social reform focuses on communities who were seeking employment in the state bureaucracy. What about those social and economic groups who were not concerned about getting their sons a coveted spot in the Indian Civil Service, but who still supported modern education? How do we understand Gujarati merchants supporting education for boys and girls? This dissertation examines how and why Gujarati merchants supported social reform in late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In 1849, Harkunvar Shethani,

widow of Sheth Hathisinh Kesrisinh, assumed financial responsibility for the first girls' school in Ahmedabad, started by the Gujarat Vernacular Society. How do we understand her patronage of the girls' school? Why did merchants of Bhavnagar city support Oza's girls' school in 1857? In the second half of the nineteenth century, merchants across colonial and princely Gujarat started donating money to schools for boys and girls. What happened in the nineteenth century that brought about this change in mercantile behavior?

Princes and Diwans promoted modern education in response to the demands of their people or needs of the state, but why did merchants support the princes in this endeavor? Supporting one's ruler was an integral part of the Gujarati (Hindu, Muslim and Jain) mercantile ethos and a renewal of the bond between political and financial powers. Rulers and merchants of Gujarat had a symbiotic relationship where the former provided an environment favorable for trade and the latter helped the state financially.[16] This dynamic existed during the pre-colonial era and continued during princely and colonial rule. The pre-colonial mercantile custom of paying tribute to the ruler by financing his cultural projects transformed in the colonial era to mercantile philanthropy for reformist projects. In chapters 2 and 6 I will show how for merchants sponsorship of educational

[16] Christopher Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen, and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Douglas E. Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India: The Shaping of a Public Culture in Surat City, 1852-1928* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991); Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat: c. 1700-1750* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1977); Michael Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976).

institutions was not a break from the past, but an evolution of the mercantile code of conduct. Just as *rajadharma* adjusted to the colonial climate, so did mercantile ethos.

Continuity and borrowing from the past will be a running theme through the dissertation. Chapter 2 discusses reformers such as Diwan Gaorishankar Oza who used ancient India as the model for a future Indian society. Oza wanted his daughters to be educated like their ancient Indian counterparts. Belief in the existence of a "golden age" inspired reformers to regenerate and revive their cultures and religions.[17] In retirement, Oza took to studying Vedantic philosophy and wrote commentaries in Gujarati. He was also initiated into a *sanyasi* (Hindu ascetic) order as Swami Sachchidanand Saraswati. Oza was not Western-educated but he shared many similarities with his contemporary Indologists. Orientalists elevated Brahmanical texts as the original source of Hinduism. By canonizing Hindu scriptures, Orientalists transformed a fragmented, largely oral set of traditions into an unchanging written form.[18] They worked from the presumption that the ultimate source of religious beliefs and practices are the scriptures.[19] Orientalists compared deistic ideas found in the Puranas and Upanishads to popular religion in the

---

[17] Uma Chakravarti, "Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi? Orientalism, Nationalism and a Script for the Past," in *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*, ed. Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999), p. 27-87; J.T.F. Jordens, *Dayanand Saraswati: His Life and Ideas* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978); Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in Nineteenth Century Punjab* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Charles H. Heimsath, *Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964); David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The Dynamics of Indian Modernization, 1773-1835* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

[18] Peter Van der Veer, "The Foreign Hand," in *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, ed. Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter Van der Veer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), p. 23-44.

[19] Rosane Rocher, "British Orientalism in the Eighteenth Century," in *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*, ed. Breckenridge and Van der Veer, p. 215-49.

late 1700s and concluded that the "original and pure" religion had become corrupted over the years and was now full of superstitions. The disconnect between scriptural religion and customary practices was explained as a fall from the "golden age."

Though reformers during the colonial era were undoubtedly influenced by European knowledge, they were also borrowing from their pre-colonial predecessors. My work shows how mid-late nineteenth century reformist ideas taking root in Gujarati society were not just born out of interactions with Western culture, but were also influenced by the environment created in the early nineteenth century by pre-colonial religious leaders such as Sahajanand Swami (1781-1830). In chapter 2 I discuss how the Swaminarayan Sampradaya with its emphasis on discipline, self-control, stricter sexual mores and curtailing excessive ritualism shared many commonalities with mid-late nineteenth-century reform movements. These values appealed to the middle class sentiments of nineteenth-century reformers who came from upper caste backgrounds. In early nineteenth century, Sahajanand worked among tribals and lower castes to promote Sanskritized Swaminarayan religious and cultural practices.

Over a century after Sahajanand's death, in 1936, Nanji Kalidas Mehta, an East African Gujarati industrialist, started the Arya Kanya Gurukul (Arya Girls' School) in Gandhi's birthplace of Porbandar. The school aimed to educate girls in a nationalist environment free from colonial control, hence its location in a princely state. Girls from all backgrounds could receive an education in an Arya Samaj-influenced environment. Swami Dayanand Saraswati, born in Saurashtra in 1824, started the Arya Samaj in 1875.

Dayanand opposed idolatry, supported widow remarriage and education for women. As per Arya doctrine, through education, one could achieve material, spiritual and social status. Dayanand's message of giving importance to merit and not birth appealed to the upwardly mobile commercial castes in Punjab as well as Gujarat. While venerating the Vedas and Sanskrit, Dayanand popularized the use of vernacular languages for transmission of Arya thought. The Arya Samaj gained authority and popularity due to its success in explaining the contemporary world of the British Raj and providing a framework for urban Hindus that allowed them to be a part of the Anglicized world and still remain within the Hindu fold.[20]

In chapter 6 I will discuss why Gujarati merchants in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Saurashtra, and even East Africa were attracted to Dayanand's teachings. Similar to Punjab, Dayanand found an audience among the Gujarati commercial castes. Mehta's Arya Samaj-inspired school found support in Saurashtra as the shift to Sanskritized Hinduism had started over a century ago with Sahajanand Swami proselytizing upper caste values among lower castes and tribals. The core message of both pre-colonial and colonial reform movements was reverence for scriptural religion and contempt for popular customs. Colonial reformers blended the traditional with the modern by promoting upper caste practices among all sections of society. These sentiments were shared by the English-educated upper caste Hindus, the Anglicized Rajput rulers and the Gujarati merchants. My dissertation examines the interactions between these various

[20] Jones, *Arya Dharm*.

groups in order to understand how they all contributed to the shaping of modern Gujarati society. Before we get to nineteenth-century Gujarat it is important to understand the culture and society of the region in the pre-colonial era. Chapter 1 gives an overview of the mercantile and political culture of Gujarat and the region's connections with the rest of the world during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

A Note on Sources

A major reason why scholars of the colonial era tend to focus on areas under direct British rule is the presence of organized archives. The British conscientiously kept records of all their activities in India for over two centuries. The British Library with their professional staff is an excellent archive for anybody using the India Office records. I found valuable official records and printed materials during my stay in London. Another source for colonial documents is the National Archives of India in New Delhi. I examined the Foreign Department, the Foreign and Political Department, and the Western India States Agency (established in 1924) records for material on Saurashtra. These files contain valuable correspondence directed to the Government of India by Residents at princely courts, Political Agents with the Kathiawar Agency, and the Government of Bombay. Since the princely states of Saurashtra were under the jurisdiction of the Government of Bombay until 1924, the Maharashtra State Archives at Bombay also has colonial documents on princely states.

But, what about those of us who want to go beyond the imperial gaze? Besides colonial archives what other venues can we use to find primary sources? How does one gather material when researching a rarely studied part of India? I solved the problem by "knocking on doors" of former princely states. I got in touch with descendants of Maharaja Bhagvatsinh of Gondal who were so happy to hear that a historian wanted to study their illustrious ancestor that they gave me complete access to Bhagvatsinh's library. At the Navlakha Palace I found writings, speeches and memoirs by Bhagvatsinh as well as Maharani Nandkunvarba. From Gondal I proceeded to Bhavnagar where I found biographies of the state's illustrious *diwans*. The Gujarat State Archive at Rajkot is a good source of annual administration reports on individual princely states. These administration reports include information on the workings of the education departments. I also went to Ahmedabad, Dhoraji, Junagadh and Porbandar. In all of the above mentioned cities I browsed public and private libraries to find relevant material for my project. A lot of the books and pamphlets were in fragile condition due to age and weather damage. After being used to computerized cataloguing at the University of Texas and the British Library, and indexes at the NAI and MSA, going through card catalogues was quite a challenge. Libraries in some of these towns had no cataloguing system so I went directly to the stacks and went through their entire collection. Researching for this dissertation required a lot of patience, optimism and enduring interest in the subject. In the end I persevered and found material that nobody has examined in the manner that I do in the following pages.

British India and the Princely States

Shaded area: Princely States (Indian States)
Unshaded area: British India

Map Int.1 Adapted from Charles Allen and Sharda Dwivedi, *Lives of the Indian Princes* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1984), p. 8-9.

Chapter 1

Pre-Colonial Gujarat: Trade, Society and Religion

The present day state of Gujarat originated in 1960 as part of the greater reshaping of independent India along linguistic lines. On May 1, 1960, Bombay state was divided into Gujarat and Maharashtra. The Gujarat state is comprised of three primary regions that have overlapping cultures and histories: eastern Gujarat, Saurashtra and Kutch. Though these regions have distinct linguistic markers and regional identities, they have also had fluid borders allowing the passage of people, goods and ideas. Mohandas Gandhi was born in the city of Porbandar in Saurashtra. He did his schooling in the city of Rajkot, also in Saurashtra. But, in 1914, on returning to India from a twenty-one year stay in South Africa, Gandhi chose to establish his residence in the historic city of Ahmedabad. Movement between Saurashtra and the cities of Eastern Gujarat (Ahmedabad, Baroda and Surat) was common and often necessary for employment or family purposes. Located on the Sabarmati river in a fertile cotton producing area, Ahmedabad served as the capital of Gujarat during the Sultanate and Mughal periods. Along with the port city of Surat, Ahmedabad came under direct British rule in early nineteenth century. Baroda remained under indirect rule, and under Maharaja Sayajirao it was one of the most important princely states in colonial India. Saurashtra, formerly known as Kathiawad, is the peninsular part separated from eastern Gujarat by the Gulf of Cambay. For most of its history Saurashtra has been a frontier region maintaining semi-

independent status from the rulers in Ahmedabad. The desert region of Kutch is another frontier area, serving as a passageway for successive migrations from Sind (now in Pakistan) to Saurashtra.

Map of Gujarat State

Map 1.1 Adapted from Raymond B. Williams, *An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hinduism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 6.

Gujarat has a long history of immigration and emigration resulting in a large diaspora. Gujarati communities exist in almost every corner of the world. While emigration from Gujarat in large numbers goes back to the nineteenth century, immigration into the region, temporary as well as permanent, has a much longer trajectory. Due to Gujarat's long coastline and its geographic position it has served as a center of trade connecting India to Africa, eastern Asia, the Middle East and eventually Europe. Attention given to the 1960 political boundaries of Gujarat state often masks the region's historical connections to the rest of the world. These connections continued during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and in subsequent chapters I will note the important role played by the diaspora in the development of a modern Gujarati culture.

This chapter gives an overview of Gujarati society in the pre-colonial period with special attention given to the economic and cultural relationships between the rulers and merchants. Rulers of Gujarat during Mughal rule (Muslims tracing Middle Eastern or Central Asian descent and Hindu Rajputs) belonged to different religious or caste groups than the merchants (Hindu Vanias, Jains and Muslims who were converts from Hinduism and retained their former caste cultures). Since the rulers and merchants did not share a common culture, they developed ways to co-exist and even formed a symbiotic relationship where the former provided an environment favorable for trade and the latter helped the state financially. This mercantile culture continued into the colonial era with Gujarati merchants adapting to British and princely rule. Gujarati merchants were heavily involved in supporting social reform and promoting education as it was part of mercantile

culture to assume leadership positions in society. Hindu, Muslim and Jain merchants showed deference to their Rajput, Muslim and British rulers by patronizing reformist projects as per the wishes of the political powers. Since the colonial world emerged from the pre-colonial environment, this chapter examines Gujarati society and culture during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

A Time of Plenty: Seventeenth-Century Gujarat

In 1663, when the Jesuit Manuel Godinho was in Surat, the most important Mughal port in Gujarat, he commented on the diversity of the Surati population which included

> *White Mughals, Indian Muslims, all types of pagans, Christians of various nationalities and, in fact, people from all over the world who have either settled in Surat or have come to the port on business. In Surat we find Spaniards, Frenchmen, Germans, English, Dutch, Flemish, Dunkirkians, Italians, Hungarians, Poles, Swedes, Turks, Arabs, Persians, Tartars, Georgians, Scythians, Chinese, Malabaris, Bengalis, Sinhalese, Armenians and an endless variety of other strange barbarian people.*[1]

Ships from China, Malacca, Djakarta, Bengal, Ceylon, Cochin, Mecca, Aden, Suez, Mogadishu, Muscat, Madagascar, Hormuz, Basra, Sind and England came to trade.[2]

---

[1] Michael N. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 160.
[2] Ibid., p. 161.

Gujarat served as a link for import and export from parts of the Mughal Empire such as Lucknow, Banaras, Lahore, Malwa and Rajasthan to the rest of the world.[3] Since Gujarat was a major cotton producing center, textiles were the chief export. Besides cotton textiles, the region was also famous for exquisite gold and silk brocades.

The port city of Surat, "the door to the House of God," served as a gateway for Muslims embarking on the annual pilgrimage of Hajj. Surati merchants in the seventeenth century lived in one of the busiest ports of the world, had access to vast capital resources and had trade connections all around the Indian Ocean. The total value of trade through Surat was at least Rs. 16 million out of which only about Rs. 1.5 million was European-owned.[4] Surati merchants consisted of Jains, Vaishnav Vanias, Khojas, Bohras and Memons. The Parsis at this time had not evolved into the formidable business community that they became in the nineteenth century. Surat's thriving commercial life made it a target of the emerging Maratha power in the Deccan. Shivaji (1630-80) attacked Surat in 1664 and 1670, carrying away significant loot both times. Raids on Surat served a dual purpose, they provided Shivaji with the money to finance his army and since Surat was a Mughal city Shivaji got to attack his nemesis, Emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707). Even after Shivaji's death in 1680, Maratha armies continued to menace Surat. With Aurangzeb's death in 1707, the Mughal umbrella over Surat and Gujarat weakened and Maratha power grew.

---

[3] Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat*, p. 65.

[4] Pearson, *Indian Ocean*, p. 164.

The city of Ahmedabad in northern Gujarat paralleled Surat's fate through the Mughal and Maratha eras. Sultan Ahmad Shah founded the city in 1411, close to the old city of Karnavati. Ahmad Shah encouraged merchants, weavers and skilled craftsmen to reside in Ahmedabad. The city's wealth, dependent on its commercial communities, grew through the fifteenth century. In 1572, Ahmedabad became a part of the Mughal Empire. The walled city served as the residence for the Mughal governor of Gujarat. During Mughal times Ahmedabad continued to flourish as trade routes from various parts of India connected in the city. The routes going north went to Rajasthan and Delhi, Malwa was to the east, Sind to the west, and ports of Cambay, Surat and Broach to the south. Traffic through Ahmedabad was overland as the Sabarmati was too shallow for navigation. Besides serving as an *entrepot*, Ahmedabad was a major producer of textiles exported to other parts of India, Southeast Asia, Middle East, Africa and eventually Europe. In 1638, during his travels through western and northern India, Mandelslo commented on the easy availability of foreign bills of exchange in Ahmedabad as the city's merchants had correspondents as far as Istanbul.[5] Similar to Surat, seventeenth-century Ahmedabad was well integrated into the global economic system. Dutch and English East India Companies started factories to buy textiles and indigo. Sarkhej, a town near Ahmedabad, was the most important center of indigo production in western India. Since cotton was the main crop grown in Gujarat, Ahmedabad was a major exporter of cotton textiles. The city's skilled weavers, mainly Muslim, were also known for their

[5] Kenneth Gillion, *Ahmedabad: A Study in Indian Urban History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), p. 15.

exquisite work with gold, silver and silk brocades. The wealth of the city was in Hindu and Jain hands as they were the financiers and traders, with the notable exception of Muslim Bohras who also engaged in trade.[6]

While Muslims formed the political class during the Sultanate and the Mughal periods, Gujarat's mercantile economy resulted in traders, financiers and businessmen occupying influential positions in society. The Gujarati merchants organized themselves into occupational *mahajans*. In Gujarat, the word *mahajan* was used to refer to an organization consisting of people that engaged in the same commercial occupation.[7] The closest European equivalent to a *mahajan* would be a guild. *Mahajans* set rules for conducting business, settled disputes between members or represented members in disputes with other *mahajans*, the state, or European companies, determined days on which the market would close for holidays, and fixed prices and wages for artisans. In bigger cities where *mahajans* had a large membership and cut across caste lines, there existed a governing council with a chairman selected by elections or hereditary connections.

In certain cities such as Ahmedabad and Surat there existed city-wide organizations headed by the *nagarsheth*. The *nagarsheth* served as the leader of the city, a mayor of sorts. The position was hereditary and in Ahmedabad the *nagarsheth* came

---

[6] Gillion, *Ahmedabad*, p. 13-16.

[7] For *mahajans* in Gujarat see Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat*; Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat*; Dwijendra Tripathi and Makrand Mehta, "Class Character of the Gujarati Business Community," in *Business Communities of India: A Historical Perspective*, ed. Dwijendra Tripathi (Ahmedabad: Manohar, 1984), p. 151-72; Shirin Mehta, "The Mahajans and the Business Communities of Ahmedabad," in *Business Communities of India*, ed. Tripathi, p. 173-84.

from the Oswal Jain community.[8] The *nagarsheth* headed the city organization whose members consisted of representatives from all the different *mahajans* functioning in the city. The purpose of this body was to regulate commercial activities that affected the entire city such as rates of exchange, or to make decisions on when to close the markets in order to observe religious days or hold a strike.[9]

One of the earliest *nagarsheths* of Ahmedabad was Shantidas Zaveri, head of the Oswal Jain community, and financier and jeweler to the Mughal courts of Emperors Jahangir (r. 1605-27) and Shah Jahan (r. 1627-58). Shantidas's sons lent money to Murad, a son of Shah Jahan and *subahdar* (governor) of Gujarat, to compete in the succession struggle during Shah Jahan's illness. Unfortunately, they backed the least powerful brother. After his victory, Emperor Aurangzeb made the pragmatic decision to continue relations between Shantidas's family and the Mughal court, even though Shantidas's sons had supported his brother and rival. Aurangzeb realized the need to have the support of influential financiers, especially in centers of Mughal power such as Ahmedabad. As a gesture of good will Aurangzeb repaid the money Murad had borrowed from Shantidas's family.[10] Gujarati merchants played an active role in the governing of Mughal cities. This tradition continued during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when Shantidas's descendants, Dalpatbhai, Lalbhai and Kasturbhai, became prominent industrialists and philanthropists in Ahmedabad. In chapter 6 I will examine how Gujarati

[8] Gillion, *Ahmedabad*, p. 22

[9] Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat*, p. 118-24; Gillion, *Ahmedabad*, p. 19-23.

[10] Gillion, *Ahmedabad*, p. 15-16; Dwijendra Tripathi, *The Dynamics of a Tradition: Kasturbhai Lalbhai and his Entrepreneurship* (New Delhi: Manohar: 1981), p. 24-30.

merchants during the colonial era assumed leadership positions in the social arena. Elite merchants went a step further and influenced the political sphere.

In Surat, the leading merchant Virji Vorah belonged to the Jain community. He too backed Murad against Aurangzeb, but accepted Aurangzeb's ultimate victory. In 1664, Shivaji raided Surat and presented his demands for ransom to the Mughal governor of the town and three of the city's leading merchants. Virji Vorah and Haji Muhammad Zahid Beg, a Muslim, were two of the merchants involved in negotiations with Shivaji. Haji Muhammad Zahid Beg, the *shahbandar*[11] of Surat, was one of the richest and most influential men in Gujarat. After Shivaji's first raid the two men petitioned Aurangzeb to increase Mughal protection for Surat against the growing military might of the Marathas.[12] Throughout his life, Haji Muhammad was involved in many key negotiations with the government on behalf of Surat's merchants, irrespective of their religious affiliations.

Merchants sought protection from rulers against foreign powers, both European and Indian, while rulers looked to merchants to finance their wars. Though Gujarati merchants had political and economic relations with the state, direct connections between merchants and the state were limited to the elite in both communities. In negotiations with the state, the head of a particular *mahajan* or the *nagarsheth* acted as the representative. When it came to internal matters such as price adjustments and setting

[11] The *Shahbandar* was the "master of the harbor." He was in charge of the port as well as the foreign merchants. He represented them in disputes with city officials.

[12] Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat*, p. 125-28.

exchange rates, *mahajans* acted autonomously. Traders and smaller merchants had limited interaction with the state as per Gujarat's long tradition of the commercial sector acting independently from the political structure.

Gujarat also has a precedent for the involvement of mercantile communities in civic life. Surat's leading merchants negotiated with Shivaji after the first Maratha raid and asked Aurangzeb for greater protection. In addition to speaking for the city's residents in times of crises, merchants were also actively involved in daily civic and religious life such as building places of worship, rest houses for travelers, hospitals and orphanages. Haji Muhammad Zahid Beg was one such merchant who built a mosque in Surat.[13] Sponsorship of festivals, shrines and saints were sacred duties for Hindus, Jains and Muslims. Building of wells and sponsoring relief efforts in times of fire, flood and famines were acts of *seva* (religious or social service) encouraged by Hinduism, Jainism and Islam. Patronage of *panjrapole* (hospice for the care of sick and wounded animals) was integral to Jainism. Since this activity demonstrated commitment to the philosophy of *ahimsa* (non-violence), it was also respected by Hindus.[14] The bigger merchants made individual donations to institutions of their choice. The smaller merchants donated by paying required dues to their respective *mahajans* who in turn sponsored religious charities. *Mahajans* worked to promote economic interests of its members while ensuring

[13] Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat*, p. 132.

[14] Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat*, p. 79; Douglas E. Haynes, "From Tribute to Philanthropy: The Politics of Gift Giving in a Western Indian City," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46:2 (May 1987): 343.

that they continued to occupy a position of high social standing. For the Gujarati merchant the commercial and socio-cultural worlds were linked.[15]

Scholarship on the nature and purpose of *mahajans* can be categorized into three viewpoints. Michael Pearson, Dwijendra Tripathi and Makrand Mehta argue that *mahajans* were commercial organizations whose main purpose was to secure the financial interests of merchants and traders. Ashin Das Gupta sees *mahajans* as social organizations whose membership was restricted along caste or religious lines. They attended to socio-cultural as opposed to commercial matters. In his work on Surat, Douglas Haynes has argued that for the Gujarati merchants, socio-cultural and commercial concerns were linked. The main goal for *mahajan* leaders was to minimize threats to their high social standing as it would hurt their economic position. My work on Saurashtra supports Haynes's findings from Surat. *Mahajans* during the colonial era sought to enhance their social position as it was connected to their economic status. In this as well as subsequent chapters I will examine how *mahajans* guarded their social status and how such behavior benefited them economically.

Religious gifting was a way for merchants to improve their status in society. This formula was not exclusive to Gujarati merchants as their contemporaries in other parts of India had similar practices. For example, the Nakarattars or Nattukottai Chettiars became the chief merchant-banking caste in South India by the second half of the nineteenth century. The Nakarattars started expanding their commercial domain in the seventeenth

[15] Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual*, p. 60-61. This was also true for merchants in northern India. See Bayly, *Rulers, Townesmen, and Bazaars*, p. 375-93.

century with religious gifting playing a key role in their business practices. Religious gifts to temples performed political and economic functions. Nakarattars invested profits from the salt trade into religious gifts to temples; in return, temples bestowed honors upon their patrons. While expanding, the Nakarattars needed to cultivate a reputation as trustworthy traders to gain access to salt markets in different areas.[16] Honors received from a recognized authority such as the temple legitimized the status of Nakarattars in new markets.

In pre-colonial India, it was essential for merchants to have a reputation of credit-worthiness. Without trust from their customers and partners, merchants could not function. The *hundi*[17] system of trade depended entirely on trust. A particular family, or an entire caste's ability to mobilize significant amounts of capital in short time and carry out transactions based on credit highlighted their high status within the trading community.[18] Maintaining and improving one's *abru* (reputation, credit) was an integral aspect of the mercantile ethos in pre-colonial times and continued on during the colonial era. Hindu and Jain merchants maintained their *abru* by conforming to an ethical code grounded in Vaishnavism and Jainism. They maintained a frugal life-style, abstained from polluting substances such as alcohol and meat, patronized religious institutions and festivals. During the colonial era, sponsorship of educational institutions was added to the ethical code of merchants, a transformation that I will examine in detail in later chapters.

---

[16] David Rudner, *Caste and Capitalism in Colonial India: The Nattukottai Chettiars* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994).

[17] *Hundis* were letters of credit issued for long distance trade. *Hundis* issued by Gujarati merchants were accepted as far west as the Ottoman Empire.

[18] Haynes, "From Tribute to Philanthropy," p. 343.

The mercantile community of Gujarat has historically played an important role in the economic, political and religious sphere during the pre-colonial as well as colonial era and continues to do so today.

The Turbulent Eighteenth Century

The prosperous seventeenth century gave way to the turbulent eighteenth century starting with Aurangzeb's death in 1707. Challenges to Mughal authority had started in the second half of the seventeenth century with the rise of Maratha power in Deccan, Jat rebellions in northern India and the European presence throughout South Asia. [19] The foundations of the Mughal Empire shook, however, after Aurangzeb's death when provincial governors started declaring their independence from Delhi. The decline of the Mughal Empire affected Ahmedabad and Surat. For over a decade between 1738 and 1753 there was political turmoil due to Marathas seeking control over Ahmedabad and Mughals refusing to give up their claim. The Marathas emerged victorious in 1757. Surat fared even worse as it was geographically closer to the Maratha base in Pune. Surat suffered repeated attacks from the Maratha army, which severely affected the city's trade. With declining Mughal control over Rajasthan, bandits freely attacked caravans along the

[19] For Mughal decline see Muzaffar Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India: Awadh and the Punjab, 1707-1748* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986). For Marathas see Stewart Gordon, *The Marathas, 1600-1818* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Stewart Gordon, *Marathas, Marauders, and State Formation in Eighteenth-Century India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994); Andre Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth-Century Maratha Swarajya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). For rise of regional power in northern India see J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Surat-Agra trade route resulting in Surati merchants refusing to issue *hundis* for goods bound for Agra. Being cut off from the hinterlands, Surat's port declined. Since the prosperity of Surat depended on the stability of the Mughal Empire, the city's fortunes declined in the first half of the eighteenth century.[20]

In 1759, when the English East India Company[21] gained control over the Surat Castle (*qila*), the Hindu and Jain merchants of the city decided to support the Company. This move was made with the calculation that the Company would provide better protection for trade than the weakened Mughal nobility or the Marathas. This Anglo-Bania[22] alliance emerged and matured during the second half of the eighteenth century. By this time the Company was a key military power in western India. Yet, there were no material benefits to this status. The Company had limited territorial acquisitions and

---

[20] In *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat,* Ashin Das Gupta argues that in addition to the weakening Mughal Empire and the resultant political chaos, Surat was also affected by the weakening Safavid control over the Persian Gulf and the decline in Ottoman power around the Red Sea provinces. With the three great Muslim Empires in decline, trade around the Arabian Sea was unsafe and risky. Das Gupta also maintains that Surat declined because of political instability and not the silting of Tapti river or competition from Bombay.

[21] For a history of European trading companies in India and the Indian Ocean see K.N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); Om Prakash, *European Commercial Enterprise in Pre-colonial India* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[22] Lakshmi Subramaniam, *Indigenous Capital and Imperial Expansion: Bombay, Surat, and the West Coast* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996). Subramaniam uses the term "Anglo-Bania Order" to describe the alliance between Hindu and Jain merchants in western India and the English East India Company during the second half of the eighteenth century. Subramaniam examines how the capital provided by the Banias aided British expansion in the Bombay Presidency. The Banias acted as bankers and financiers for the British in return for protection from the Marathas. The term Bania is used to describe those engaged in trade. It is used as a professional term as opposed to a caste or religious marker. Banias in Gujarat can be Hindus or Jains, they can belong to the Vanik or some other caste. While Muslims and Parsis were not members of the Bania *mahajans*, Europeans often referred to them as banias if they were engaged in trade.

relied on the Bengal government for financial support.[23] The Company headquarter in western India, Bombay, was then a small island which provided no land revenue. In this environment, the European merchants based in Bombay were heavily dependent on their Gujarati counterparts. It was through the Gujarat- and Banaras-based financiers that the Company was able to transfer funds from Bengal to Bombay.

Hindu and Jain traders benefited from the new socio-political environment and their sway over local society increased resulting in disgruntlement among the Muslim population of Surat.[24] The Muslim political class lost their high status due to declining Mughal power further exacerbating tensions between the religious communities. In this scenario the city government proved incapable of maintaining civic order resulting in frequent riots between members of various religious communities. The volatile situation culminated in the Surat riots of 1795 led by Muslim protestors with Bania property as the target.[25] Realizing that the Nawab of Surat was unwilling or unable to provide adequate protection, the Bania Mahajan observed a city-wide strike. The strike also affected European businesses. The Bania Mahajan chastised the Company, the holders of the Surat Castle, for not providing protection for the city's residents. With the Company unwilling to assume more political authority over Surat and the Nawab seeking to reach a resolution with the city's merchants, the parties involved reached a compromise. Though

---

23 For more on English East India Company's territorial and commercial expansion in Bengal and northern India see P.J. Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead – Eastern India, 1740-1828* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Christopher A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*.

24 Subramaniam, *Indigenous Capital and Imperial Expansion*, p. 172-73, 214-21.

25 Ibid., p. 221-36.

this incident did not result in an overhaul of the city administration, it did remind the Company that they could not function in western India without the cooperation of the Bania community and the Banias once again realized that they could not solely depend on the Muslim nobility for protection.

The alliance with Banias proved beneficial for the Company during the Anglo-Maratha wars as it helped finance the operation. Banias transferred funds from Bengal to Bombay in order for the Company to pay its army. By early nineteenth century the Company became the dominant political power in western India and its territorial holdings increased resulting in a rise in revenue. With its change in fortunes in western India, the Company became less dependent on the Bengal branch and the indigenous *hundi* network to transfer funds. The Company no longer relied on Surati Banias in a manner that it had half a century earlier. With the emergence of Bombay as a major commercial power and the unstable political environment in Surat, many merchants from the city migrated to the island. Surati merchants viewed the Company as a political power that could guarantee protection for their goods and property. As per their culture, merchants pledged loyalty to the Company in return for protection.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there was heavy migration from Gujarat to Bombay, especially members of mercantile communities. By the nineteenth century, the most dominant Gujaratis in the Bombay commercial scene were the Parsis. Followers of the Zoroastrian faith, Parsis had migrated to western India from Iran in multiple waves and had settled in Navsari district of Gujarat near the city of Surat. From

the early seventeenth century, Parsis were involved in European trade, especially English factories set in Surat. With the decline of Surat and constant attacks by Marathas, many Parsis moved to Bombay where they continued working as middlemen for European firms. Such was their presence that almost all European trade through Bombay's port passed via Parsi firms.[26] During the nineteenth century, Parsis went from working for European firms to starting and owning their own family firms.

Khojas and Memons, both Muslim groups, migrated from Saurashtra and Kutch to Bombay. They had already been active in trade with Muscat and East Africa, especially Zanzibar, and continued to do so after moving to Bombay. Bhatias, Lohanas and Bhansalis were the Hindu migrants from Saurashtra and Kutch. While Lohanas and Bhansalis had been petty traders before coming to Bombay, once in the city they started engaging in bigger ventures with considerable success.[27] The Dasa Oswals of Kutch were the most prominent Jain group in Bombay. The Muslim community in Bombay also consisted of Daudi and Sulaimani Bohras, though the latter were a small community. The Kapol Vanias were the most prominent of the Vaishnav Vanias living in the city. All Gujarati migrants in Bombay continued to maintain contact with Gujarat. They had trade links with family and caste members back home. They sponsored religious and civic causes in their ancestral villages and cities. The Gujarati community of Bombay played a key role in social reform not just in the city but also in Gujarat. In upcoming chapters I

[26] Christine Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India: Politics and Communities in Bombay City 1840-1855* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 2-3.

[27] Ibid., p. 4

will examine in detail the influence of Gujarati merchants on promotion of education in Saurashtra.

With Bombay as its headquarters the Company started acquiring territory in western India. By 1817-1818, the Company had defeated the Marathas and carved out four districts from their holdings in Gujarat. The districts of Ahmedabad, Kheda, Surat and Broach came under direct British rule; Saurashtra and Kutch remained under princely rule. Kathiawad, now known by its ancient Sanskrit name of Saurashtra, was exclusively under the control of Indian kings. The Greeks and Romans had referred to the region as Saurastrene; Muslims used the Prakritized name Sorath. The British continued the Maratha policy and referred to the region as Kathiawad. Originally the term Kathiawad was used for a small portion of the province named after its Kathi rulers who came from Kutch in the thirteen and fourteen centuries. The Marathas extended the name to the entire peninsular region and the British followed suit.[28]

One of the earliest mentions of Saurashtra in the historical record is during the Emperor Ashoka's reign (3rd -2nd century BC) when he inscribed his edicts upon huge granite boulders at the entrance of the mountain pass that leads from Junagadh city to Mount Girnar.[29] The famous Mount Girnar is a holy place for both Jains and Hindus with devotees going on pilgrimages to various temples and shrines built at different levels of the mountain. Dwarka near Kutch is an important Vaishnava shrine. Satrunjaya located on a mountain in Palitana is an important Jain *tirtha* (pilgrimage site). Prabhas Pattan or

[28] Amarji, *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, p. 1.
[29] Ibid., p. 6.

Somnath in southern Saurashtra has one of the twelve Shaiva Jyotirlingas. Ahilyabai Holkar, the famous Maratha ruler, following her policy of patronizing Brahmans and temples, repaired the ruined Somnath temple in 1783. In recent decades the temple at Somnath has gained a prominent place in India's historical memory. Hindu nationalists have revived and sensationalized the sack of Somnath by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1026. The BJP leader Lal Krishna Advani's famous 1989 *rathyatra* started from Somnath.

Saurashtra has long been a frontier region, vacillating between being under Ahmedabad's control to having semi-independent status. Only when Gujarat was under powerful rulers, such as the Mughal Emperor Akbar (r. 1556-1605), did Saurashtra come under direct rule from Ahmedabad. Most of the time smaller kings and chieftains exercised control over the region with militaristic groups such as Rajputs and Kathis holding sway over the population. Like Ahmedabad and Surat, Saurashtra was a major cotton producing and exporting center; its ports had linkages with eastern Gujarat, the Middle East and Africa. The most important city in Saurashtra during Mughal times was Junagadh. Even during the colonial era Junagadh state occupied the highest position in the princely state hierarchy. Other important states in terms of size and population, ranked in descending order: Nawanagar, Bhavnagar, Porbandar, Gondal and Rajkot.

Dawn of British Rule over Gujarat

With declining Mughal influence in the eighteenth century, Ahmedabad's power over the region weakened and Saurashtra once again became a frontier region. In this era

of decentralization, chieftains engaged in constant wars with their neighbors to defend their possessions or increase territory. Warrior groups such as Rajputs, Marathas and Kathis established political entities in western India by offering military protection in exchange for loyalty. Though the eighteenth century was a time of chaos in much of India, it was also a time of great upward mobility. Ranchodji Amarji's *Tarikh-i-Sorath* gives an account of the ever shifting alliances in Saurashtra at a time when there was no dominant power. The key princely states that I will examine in the dissertation, Bhavnagar, Junagadh and Gondal, declared their independence from Mughals and Marathas in the first half of the eighteenth century.

In 1720s, Bhavsinh I (b. 1683) fought off the Marathas and claimed control over southeastern Saurashtra. In 1723, he established his capital at Bhavnagar, a city named after him.[30] Under Bhavsinh I, Bhavnagar became a militarily stronger state and attracted traders from areas under Mughal or Maratha control.[31] To escape frequent Maratha raids, merchants from the neighboring ports of Gogha and Cambay migrated to Bhavnagar and asked the king for protection.[32] Wakhtsinh (r. 1772-1816), Bhavsinh's grandson, captured the nearby coastal city of Mahuva and developed its port to attract more merchants to his state.[33] By 1789, Bhavnagar port was exporting one-third of Gujarat's cotton, a result of policies set in place by Bhavsinh and continued by Wakhtsinh.[34] The Gohil Rajput rulers

---

[30] Howard Spodek, *Urban-Rural Integration in Regional Development: A Case Study of Saurashtra, India, 1800-1960* (The University of Chicago: Department of Geography, 1976), p. 30.

[31] Amarji, *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, p. 95-98.

[32] Alexander Forbes, *Ras Mala* (London: Richardson and Company, 1878), p. 418.

[33] Ibid., p. 420.

[34] Spodek, *Urban-Rural Integration,* p. 19.

of Bhavnagar provided merchants with much desired stability and protection, making Bhavnagar one of the most prosperous states in Saurashtra.

In mid-eighteenth century, the Jadeja Rajput Kumbhoji II built Gondal state by forming alliances with the Muslim Nawab of Junagadh and the Maratha Gaekwad of Baroda. Sherkhan Bahadurkhan Babi, the Mughal Governor of Saurashtra, declared independence from Ahmedabad in 1748, becoming the first Nawab of Junagadh.[35] As new rulers, Kumbhoji II and Sherkhan Babi supported each other's political ambitions. In return for providing Junagadh military and financial assistance in its time of need, the Nawab transferred Dhoraji and Upleta districts to Kumbhoji II of Gondal.[36] The towns of Dhoraji and Upleta were centers of trade and home to commercial Muslim communities, the Khojas, Bohras and Memons. We will see in subsequent chapters the important role played by Muslim merchants and traders in promoting education in Gondal and supporting the ruler's reformist policies.

During the colonial era, the Nawab of Junagadh occupied the top rank among princes of Saurashtra in the princely hierarchy set by the imperial power. He had the right to collect *zortalbi*, an annual tribute from all the princely rulers of Saurashtra. Various Rajput and Kathi princely states continued to pay this tribute to the Muslim ruler of Junagadh until the end of the princely era in 1947-48.[37] Junagadh in turn paid tribute to the Gaekwad of Baroda who was the senior ruler in all of Gujarat. It was a common

---

[35] *Forty Years of the Rajkumar College, Vol.1* (Bhavnagar, 1911) p. 264.
[36] H.L. Dave, *A Short History of Gondal* (Bombay: Education Society's Press, 1889), p. 25-58.
[37] Administration Reports of Junagadh, Bhavnagar and Gondal states, various years.

practice in pre-colonial India for stronger states to exact tribute from their weaker neighbors. Since 1735, the Gaekwad of Baroda periodically sent his army to exact tribute, a practice that was disliked in Saurashtra as the army ravaged villages in its path.[38] Various city-states in Saurashtra resisted the *mulkgiri* army making it difficult for the Gaekwad to collect *peshkash* (tribute). Both the Gaekwad of Baroda and the Nawab of Junagadh were constantly challenged when they attempted to collect *peshkash* or *jamabandi (*revenue) from the various city-states. [39]

Having trouble enforcing his authority in the region, the Gaekwad requested help from the English East India Company. The Company for a while had wanted to exert greater authority in Saurashtra. Major (later colonel) Alexander Walker, the British Resident at the Gaekwad's court was convinced that the Company could not rely on Baroda's weak ruler. Walker was pushing for the Company to become the dominant power in the region.[40] The British welcomed Baroda's request for assistance in collecting tribute from Saurashtra's city-states. In 1807, Walker leading the Company army reached a settlement with the various rulers who agreed to pay a fixed yearly tribute to the Gaekwad. The deal between Saurashtra's rulers and Baroda, orchestrated by the Company, became known as the Walker Settlement. Now there no longer was a need for the Gaekwad to send his *mulkgiri* army to extract tribute. Walker's actions eliminated the

---

[38] H. Wilberforce-Bell, *History of Kathiawad* (New Delhi: Ajay Book Service, 1980), p. 127. The book was originally published in 1916 by W. Heinemann, London. Captain Wilberforce-Bell was a political agent in Kathiawad.

[39] Yagnik, *Gaorishankar Udayashankar*, p. 5-6

[40] Pamela Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India, 1784-1806* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 210-212.

Gaekwad's annual military presence in Saurashtra and made the British popular among the local princes who disliked the *mulkgiri* expeditions. Around this time Walker also managed to get half of Porbandar's port for the Company.[41] The British had their eyes set on Bhavnagar port for a while since after the decline of Surat, most of Saurashtra's produce was exported through Bhavnagar.[42] But the Raja of Bhavnagar resisted any encroachment on his territories. With half of the cotton exported by Bombay in the early 1800s coming from Saurashtra, the Company had a vested interest in the region.[43]

In 1817, after facing defeat in the Maratha Wars, the Peshwa in Pune ceded all his rights in Saurashtra to the British. By 1820, the Gaekwad also ceded his authority over the region to the British. Two years later the Company started collecting *zortalbi* tribute on behalf of Junagadh state; in return the Company kept one-quarter of the tribute amount. Though the dominant military power in the region, the Company's policies were a continuation from the eighteenth century. They concentrated on increasing cotton trade, gaining access to ports and suppressing piracy at ports. The ultimate goal was to rule cheaply and maintain the existing system of governance. The only deviation from this trade-oriented policy was the Company's active suppression of female infanticide, a point I will examine in detail in the next chapter. The Company never annexed any of the city-states in Saurashtra. They along with Baroda became a part of Britain's informal Empire. The Company did have direct rule over the cities of Ahmedabad and Surat in eastern

[41] Ibid., p. 232.
[42] Ibid., p. 225
[43] Ibid., p. 226.

Gujarat. The rest of the region remained under Indian rule with the various kingdoms referred to as the princely states.

Gujarat came under the jurisdiction of the British-controlled Government of Bombay. The Kathiawar Agency oversaw the princely states of Saurashtra. With its headquarters at Rajkot, a city picked because of its centrality, the Kathiawar Agency governed a region of about 350 princely states. By the time of the 1807 Walker Settlement, the three big states of Saurashtra – Junagadh, Nawanagar and Bhavnagar – had been expanding for over half a century.[44] Throughout eighteenth century these three princely states had been taking over territories from their weaker neighbors. The Walker Settlement froze boundaries of princely states in Saurashtra. Hence, the high number of princely states as many included those states which amounted to a few villages. These small principalities would have been eaten by larger more powerful states without British intervention. But, with the Walker Settlement, the Company became the dominant political power in Saurashtra and did not allow princely states to annex any more territory. Of the 350 princely states, many consisted of small villages. The smaller states were often called principalities in imperial discourse in order to differentiate them from the larger kingdoms such as Junagadh and Bhavnagar.

Among the princely states in Saurashtra, only eighteen were important enough (in terms of size, revenue and population) to be ranked as salute states. The ruler of a salute state received an artillery salute on state occasions. The remaining states were non-salute

44 Harald Tambs-Lyche, *Power, Profit and Poetry: Traditional Society in Kathiawar, Western India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1997), p. 283-90.

states and ranked lower on the princely hierarchy. When the Chamber of Princes was formed in 1921, only forty-two salute and non-salute states were important enough to be given representation. Even among the forty-two, only the eighteen salute states were entitled to a seat in the Chamber. The remaining twenty-four non-salute states elected two representative members among themselves.[45] In the subsequent chapters I will only be dealing with salute states of Saurashtra, such as Junagadh, Nawanagar, Bhavnagar, Porbandar, Gondal and Rajkot.

Cities in Saurashtra at the beginning of nineteenth century were primarily political centers.[46] They were founded by the ruling dynasty and served as the state capital. Cities would rise and fall depending on the ruler's fortune. Besides the ruling class which was tied to the land, the rest of the population which included merchants, professionals, artisans and farmers had considerable mobility. Since there were numerous states in a relatively small area, people had the option to move to a state that offered favorable living conditions. People's ability to leave for greener pastures often served as a check on the ruler's dictatorial tendencies as an under-populated territory was not in his favor. The Kunbis were the farming caste who tilled the land, but rarely owned it. The landlord often charged a higher tax than the Kunbi wished to pay and during desperate times, farmers moved to a neighboring state in protest. Royal accounts take pride in projecting their ruler as an individual whose policies attracted Kunbis to his state.[47] Bhavnagar state

[45] Mcleod, *Sovereignty, Power, Control*, p. 5-9.
[46] Spodek, *Urban-Rural Integration*, p. 11-13.
[47] Dave, *Short History of Gondal*, p. 53-54.

attracted merchants from neighboring states by developing their ports and policing the seas to ward off pirates. The court presented merchants who established new shops in the state with a *poshak* (ceremonial robe), recognizing their contribution to the community.[48] Rulers had an incentive to make their territories attractive to traders and farmers as they would bring more revenue.

A large percentage of the ruling class consisted of Rajputs followed by Kathis and Kolis. For a region with relatively low Muslim population, Saurashtra did have states under Sunni Muslim kings, mainly Babi Pathans. The rulers of Junagadh, the most prominent state in Saurashtra, were Babi Pathans. Administrative positions were mainly occupied by Nagar Brahmans (a traditionally literate caste) who were in demand because of their knowledge of Persian and later English.[49] While all accounts of Saurashtra remember Nagar Brahmans as important figures, they are never listed as prominent priests or religious men. Their prominence was a result of their mastery of various languages and skills as administrators. The Gohil Rajput ruler of Bhavnagar state attracted Nagar Brahmans from the rival city of Gogha by offering them positions in the state administration.[50] Rulers often gave Nagars the right to collect revenue from certain villages in return for their service. In the Muslim-ruled Junagadh, Nagar Brahmans, *sipahis* (soldiers) and Sayyids enjoyed special privileges, exempting them from paying

---

[48] K.V. Mehta, *Gaurishankar Udaishankar Oza*, p. 194, 196, 201-02.

[49] Gaurishankar Oza, Samaldas Parmanandas, Prabhashankar Pattani, all Nagar Brahmans, were Diwans of Bhavnagar in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ranchodji Amarji, a Nagar Brahman, was the Diwan of Junagadh before the British era.

[50] J.W. Watson, *Statistical Account of Bhavnagar* (Bombay: Education Society's Press, 1883), p. 12.

taxes.[51] Hindu and Jain Vanias, both mercantile communities, often stepped out of their caste occupation by serving as state administrators. Mohandas Gandhi's Hindu Modh Vania family members occupied key positions at courts of Porbandar and Rajkot.

Just as the rest of India, Saurashtra had a complex society where caste occupations were not permanent. Either responding to new opportunities or adjusting to difficult times, castes or sub-castes changed their professions. The most dramatic example of changing occupations would be the petty chieftains and *grasias* (feudal aristocracy) who, when dispossessed of their lands, often became *bahaarvatiyaa* (outlaws).[52] *Grasias* included relatives and supporters of the ruling family. For their service the ruler gave them land and rights to its produce. In the fluid political conditions that existed in western India during the eighteenth century, an able *grasia* could become a king. If a man born in a *grasia* family could command an army and carve out a territory for himself he could die as a king. The opportunity for upward mobility for *grasias* ended with the 1807 Walker Settlement that froze political boundaries in Saurashtra. As part of the Walker Settlement, the English East India Company recognized princes as sovereigns of their territories and *grasias* became subordinates for life.[53] With solidification of political hierarchies the disgruntled *grasia* class turned inwards. They no longer had the chance to establish dynasties of their own and were relegated to a permanent subordinate status to the royal family. Friction between the rulers and *grasias* continued to increase.

---

[51] Amarji, *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, p. 26-27, 33.
[52] Copland, *British Raj and the Indian Princes*, p. 100.
[53] Ibid., p. 22-25, 112.

The rulers saw *grasias* as parasites living off the state and asking for more land. Some *grasias* even went into outlawry when their demands were not met.

The Kathiawar Agency and Princes of Saurashtra regarded *grasias* as a nuisance whose ignorance led them to outlawry. In chapter 4 I will examine how and why Raja Bhagvatsinh, the ruler of Gondal state, started a special school for *grasias*. It must be noted that not all nineteenth-century accounts looked unfavorably upon the outlaws. By mid-nineteenth century, *bahaarvatiyaa* became romanticized folk heroes for certain sections of the Indian and British population. The poet Jhaverchand Meghani's *Sorathi Bahaarvatiyaa* did much to contribute to this image. Since the *bahaarvatiyaa* attacked state property, British writers such as C.A. Kincaid portrayed them as Robin Hood characters.[54] It was this colorful, dramatic and frontier region that the British inherited when they became the Paramount Power in the 1820s.

British interest in Saurashtra emerged due to the region's high cotton cultivation.[55] After 1820, the Company continued to follow its policy of indirect rule in the region. Princely states maintained sovereignty though there were limitations since many paid an annual tribute to the Nawab of Junagadh, the Gaekwad of Baroda and the British government.[56] Policies enacted by the Kathiawar Agency paralleled actions taken in other areas under the Bombay Presidency. Responsibility for creating a British administrative system in the newly annexed Maratha and Mughal territories fell on

---

[54] C.A. Kincaid, *The Outlaws of Kathiawar and Other States* (Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1905).

[55] Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India*, p. 226.

[56] Administrations Reports of Princely States, various years.

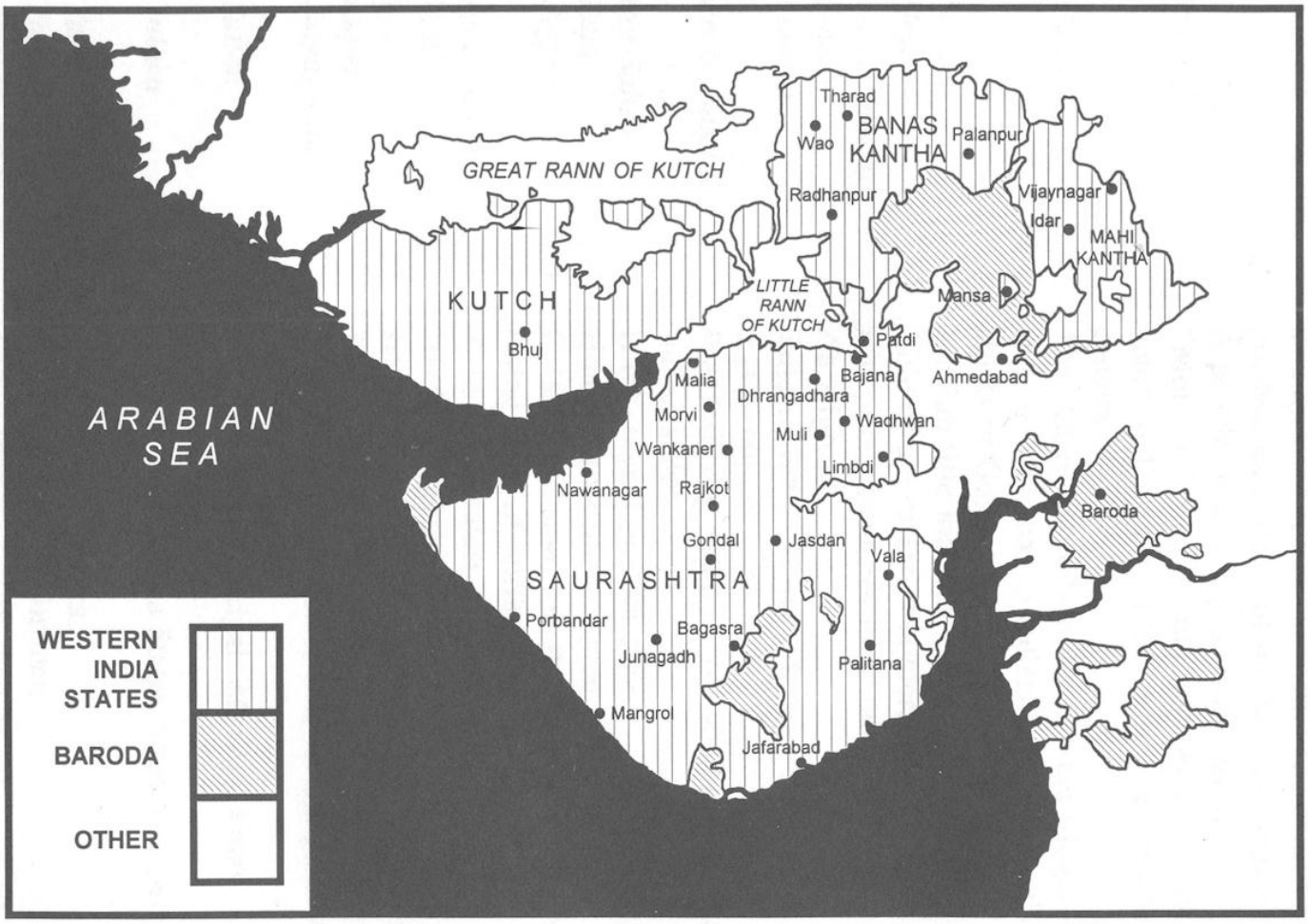
Mountstuart Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay Presidency from 1819 to 1827. Not in favor of a complete change to an Anglicized system of government, Elphinstone sought to win over the Maratha elites by preserving their institutions.[57] He restored lands, privileges and judicial powers to landed elites and returned temple lands to Brahmans and patronized learning. Similarly in Saurashtra, the British did not formally annex territory. Instead, they focused on enacting their policies through informal rule. Indirect or informal rule in Saurashtra meant that the princes continued to be in charge of their territories. The major change was the presence of the British Resident[58] who ensured that the princely states towed the imperial line.

The commercial castes of Saurashtra adjusted to the new political and economic environment in a manner similar to their counterparts in other parts of the Bombay Presidency. Long used to maintaining friendly relationships with Muslim and Rajput rulers, Saurashtra's merchants now directed their energies at cultivating relationships with the British. They continued their trade in various materials including textiles. Merchant castes often moved to other princely states or British territories in search of better trading facilities. Bhavnagar lured merchants by offering trade incentives and developing its ports. As Bombay developed from a tiny fishing island to a major commercial center, many members of Saurashtra's trading castes moved to the new city in search of greater opportunities. Gujaratis also moved to East and South Africa as traders and indentured laborers. While living in Bombay or Africa, they continued to

[57] Ramusack, *Indian Princes and their States*, p. 86.
[58] For more on Residents and indirect rule see Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India*.

maintain contact with their places of origin, often sending money back to their family, caste councils and religious organizations. Though the imperial rulers divided India into British and Indian territories, people frequently crossed boundaries and money flowed with relative ease.

When it came to matters of religion and culture the British policy in Saurashtra was one of non-interference. The major exception to this rule was on the issue of female infanticide when at the behest of Christian missionaries the Company got involved in stopping the practice among certain castes. It was the lower level officers and Residents at princely courts who first noticed the prevalence of the practice of female infanticide, especially among the militaristic groups, such as Rajputs and Kathis. Local Company officials took the initiative in working to end female infanticide; they in turn influenced their superiors in Bombay to pay attention to this social issue. The upper echelons of imperial leadership in this case deferred to the observations of their subordinates as the latter were in direct touch with the bulk of the native population. The campaign to end female infanticide represented the first phase of social reform in nineteenth-century Gujarat to which we now turn.



Map of Colonial Gujarat

Western India States and Baroda are Princely States
Unshaded area: Areas under direct British rule

Map 1.2 Adapted from John Mcleod, *Sovereignty, Power, Control: Politics in the States of Western India, 1916-1947* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1999), p. xiv.

Chapter 2

Regeneration of Gujarati Society

From the earliest days of the British presence, the English East India Company concentrated on gaining access to key ports in Gujarat. With its high cotton production and long coastline, Gujarat was a valuable territory for trade. British policy focused on improving the Company's mercantile prospects in the region and stayed away from causes that did not have a financial impact. There was one major exception to the policy of indirect rule – female infanticide. Company men and Christian missionaries were equally aghast upon learning of the practice of female infanticide among certain Rajput, Kathi, and Kunbi castes of Gujarat. Among Jadeja Rajputs the proportion of male to female was 1.46:1.[1] These skewed sex ratios were first brought to the Company's attention in late eighteenth century by Major (later Colonel) Alexander Walker, Resident at the Gaekwad of Baroda's court. With the Bombay government's support, Walker carried out further investigations and worked to stop the practice. Successive residents also took up the cause to end female infanticide. In fact it was the Residents and political agents in Saurashtra who continuously pressured Bombay to intervene on this issue. Company men in Bombay and London were more interested in furthering their commercial enterprise in the region; social reform was not a high priority. When it came

[1] John Wilson, *History of the Suppression of Infanticide in Western India* (Bombay: Smith, Taylor and Co, 1855), p. 356. Sex ratios among Jadeja Rajputs were the most disproportional. Other Rajput castes did not carry out female infanticide at the same rate as the Jadejas. The reason behind Jadeja practice of eliminating daughters will be explained later in the chapter.

to female infanticide it was the lower rungs of the Company hierarchy that set the agenda and prevailed upon their superiors to take action.[2]

John Wilson, the honorary president of the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society and a missionary of the Free Church of Scotland, wrote an account of British attempts to end female infanticide. Wilson saw the steps taken by the British as acts of "Christian philanthropy."[3] He held Hinduism responsible for the low status of Indian women. Since Hindu scriptures treated women as inferior beings, their value in society was secondary to men. As per Wilson's understanding of Hinduism, religious attitudes were responsible for female infanticide, Sati, and lack of education among women.[4] These attitudes were so pervasive that even years of Muslim rule had not resulted in any changes.[5] Only acts of Christian philanthropy, he asserted, could save these women and Hindu society. Where Muslims had failed, Christians would succeed. With this attitude, Wilson along with his fellow Christian missionaries and like-minded Company men worked to abolish female infanticide.

Wilson's attitudes towards Hinduism were shared by Christian missionaries and Company men in other parts of India. [6] Nineteenth-century liberal reformers considered it their duty to save Indian women from their own cultural and religious practices. In all

---

[2] Wilson's *History of the Suppression of Infanticide in Western India* focuses on Saurashtra and Kutch. He explains the motives of those working to end female infanticide, obstacles faced in their pursuit, and actions taken to stop the prevalent practice. Wilson includes passages from letters and reports by political agents in the region. The important role played by the political agents in shaping policy is evident from his account.

[3] Ibid., p. 5, 10.

[4] Ibid., p. 32-36.

[5] Ibid., p. 85.

[6] Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, p. 12-14.

these endeavors, the British received assistance from like-minded Indians. Over time, it was Indian reformers who assumed leadership positions and set their own agenda. The "woman question" in Gujarat was similar to the rest of India in that it focused on how women should be modernized.

This chapter examines Indian and British efforts to regenerate and revive Gujarati society after the decline of the Mughal Empire. Sahajanand Swami, a Hindu religious figure in the early nineteenth century, worked to end female infanticide and pacify the militarized castes and tribal groups who had become important in the eighteenth-century era of decentralization. The English East India Company supported Sahajanand, as his reformist efforts provided political stability in areas newly conquered by the British. Though Sahajanand accepted British support he was not working under their tutelage. Historiography on social reform has highlighted the differences between pre-colonial and colonial reformers. I argue that teachings of indigenous reformers such as Sahajanand did not die with the advent of British rule. Mid-late nineteenth-century reformist ideas taking root in Gujarati society were not just born out of interactions with Western culture but were also influenced by the environment created in the early nineteenth century by the establishment of the Swaminarayan Sampradaya by Sahajanand. The Swaminarayan Sampradaya with its emphasis on discipline, self-control, stricter sexual mores and curtailing excessive ritualism shared many commonalities with mid-late nineteenth-century reform movements. These values appealed to the middle class sentiments of colonial reformers who came from upper caste backgrounds. The core message of both

pre-colonial and colonial reform movements was reverence for scriptural religion and contempt for popular practices.

Attempts by Indian religious reformers such as Sahajanand Swami merged with British efforts at ending female infanticide in Gujarat. I will discuss differences in Indian and British perceptions of Sahajanand's activities. I will also examine how transitional[7] reformers such as Sahajanand influenced later day acculturative[8] reform movements. Transitional reformers laid the ground work from which acculturative reformers and movements emerged. While acculturative reformers were influenced by colonial knowledge, they indigenized European ideas and adapted them to the Indian environment. Unlike Bengal and northern India where reformist ideas were most popular among those seeking colonial employment, in princely ruled Saurashtra we see active involvement of princes and *diwans* in reformist causes.[9] Due to the strong mercantilist tradition prevalent in Gujarati society, members of trading castes used their traditional leadership positions to promote education, making social reforms in Gujarat uniquely

---

[7] Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 1-4. Jones uses the term "transitional" to describe socio-religious reform movements that originated in the pre-colonial era from indigenous forms of dissent. These movements had little or no influence from the colonial milieu. Transitional movements lacked Anglicized leaders and were not concerned with adjusting their concepts to the colonial world.

[8] Acculturative socio-religious movements originated from the colonial milieu and were led by individuals who were products of cultural interaction. Followers were English-educated South Asians who aimed to accommodate their heritage to British rule. Despite heavy influence from the West, acculturative movements did have roots in South Asian culture. Ibid., p. 1-4.

[9] For reform movements in Bengal and northern India see Kopf, *Brahmo Samaj;* Minault, *Secluded* Scholars; Jones, *Arya Dharm*; Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*. For other parts of India see Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements;* Heimsath, *Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform*.

multi-class and multi-caste projects. We will see that from the earliest days of colonial rule, English as well as non-English educated Indians showed interest in carrying out social and religious reform within their communities in order to adjust and shape the emerging world. Indians actively promoted social reforms such as ending female infanticide or educating women and played a key role in indigenizing European knowledge.

Crusade to End Female Infanticide

The campaign to end female infanticide started in early nineteenth century and carried on for decades. Uplifting the status of women was a cornerstone of Britain's civilizing mission in India from its earliest days; in fact it was the oldest reformist project. In his *History of British India* (1818), James Mill used the status of women to classify civilizations on a ladder of progress.[10] James Mill argued that a woman's position in society could be used to gauge that particular culture's scale of advancement. Unlike Orientalists, James Mill did not find anything worth preserving in Indian culture. Liberals believed that European superiority in scientific, cultural, and moral matters made it their duty to reform Indian society. What the nation needed was a fresh start through exposure to western learning. Orientalists such as Sir William Jones and Warren Hastings believed that Indian culture had degenerated from the Vedic Age. The remedy for this current state

[10] Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 30-31.

of ignorance was to bring back the "golden age."[11] While Orientalists and Utilitarians differed in their view of the Indian past they did agree on the urgent need to reform contemporary society. In this endeavor the British partnered with Indians. Rammohan Roy (1772-1833), the father of Indian social reform, worked with the Company to ban Sati (widow immolation). All social reform projects in the nineteenth century focused on women-centric issues: Sati, female infanticide and widow remarriage. In Saurashtra, female infanticide was the first social reform issue that the British championed.

While he was posted at the Baroda court, Major Alexander Walker learned of female infanticide among various castes, especially Jadeja Rajputs of Saurashtra. Upon investigation, Walker found out the low number (1:1.46) of Rajput girls that reached adulthood as compared to boys. The practice of hypergamous marriage enabled female infanticide among Jadeja Rajputs who regarded themselves as the most superior of all Rajputs in the region. Since the father of the bride assumed an inferior position to the father of the groom, no Jadeja Rajput wanted to find himself in such a deplorable position. The answer to avoid being the father of a bride was to either not have a daughter or to prevent one from reaching a marriageable age. Another common reason for female infanticide was the expense associated with a daughter's wedding. This led to the formation of an Infanticide Fund in 1825 to help poor Rajputs marry their daughters. Other castes besides Jadeja Rajputs limited the number of daughters in their family to one or two due to high marriage costs.

---

[11] Chakravarti, "Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi? Orientalism, Nationalism and a Script for the Past," in *Recasting Women*, ed. Sangari and Vaid, p. 27-87; Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance*; Jordens, *Dayanand Saraswati*; Jones, *Arya Dharm*; Heimsath, *Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform*.

Moral arguments against female infanticide did not hold much sway as the greater society accepted it as a cultural practice among certain castes. Jains in many districts had prevailed upon Rajputs to enter agreements not to slaughter animals. But Jains made no attempt to end female infanticide as they regarded it as a caste issue on which outsiders should not interfere.[12] If Rajputs refused to give their daughters in marriage to those families that carried out female infanticide the practice could have been curtailed. However, there was no chance of such a boycott as the local population was comfortable with the practice. Since Rajputs carried out female infanticide due to convenience or matter of honor, the way to end it was to make it a matter of dishonor. Those who engaged in female infanticide would be considered as inferior. This strategy worked among certain Rajputs families. Dewaji, the Jadeja Raja of Gondal, preserved many of his daughters.[13] The Jam of Nawanagar, the senior most Jadeja ruler, proved to be uncooperative. The British wanted him to use his position to influence others and stop the practice, but the Jam failed to do so.[14] A century later, Dewaji's descendent Bhagvatsinh would become a pioneer of women's education. Steps taken to improve the position of women in society under Dewaji did not go in vain.

Political agents and residents stationed in Saurashtra along with Christian missionaries worked to end female infanticide but had limited success. Walker had set a precedent not to engage in coercion while dealing with those who carried out female infanticide. Walker and his successors worked to change the societal mindset by

---

[12] Wilson, *Suppression of Infanticide*, p. 263.
[13] Ibid., p. 79-82.
[14] Ibid., p. 158.

engaging with community leaders. In some cases, such as Dewaji of Gondal, the British were successful, but there were others who followed in the Jam of Nawanagar's footsteps and refused to speak out against the practice. The British while concentrating on getting the various castes of Saurashtra to stop female infanticide in their families and the broader society found a much needed ally in Sahajanand Swami, a religious leader on the rise in early nineteenth-century Saurashtra.

An Ally in the Fight against Female Infanticide

Sahajanand Swami (1781-1830), the founder of the Swaminarayan sect of Hinduism was born as Ghanshyam to Brahman parents in Chhapia, a village near Ayodhya in North India. While a teenager he became an ascetic and traveled across India receiving his religious and philosophical training in the "school of spiritual vagrancy."[15] His spiritual quest of seven years took him from the Himalayas to eastern and later southern India, ultimately reaching Gujarat to visit the famous Krishna temple at Dwarka. By this time Ghanshyam had become Neelkanth and came into contact with a group of ascetics in Saurashtra. These ascetics were followers of Ramananda Swami (b. 1739) who belonged to the Ramanuja school of Vaishnav philosophy. Ramananda initiated Neelkanth into his order as a Vaishnav ascetic and gave him the name of Sahajanand

[15] Raymond B. Williams, *An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hinduism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 14.

Swami. Two years later Ramananda died in 1802 after naming Sahajanand as his successor.[16]

On becoming the leader of the Ramanandi sect, Sahajanand banned consumption of alcohol and meat among his followers. He expected his ascetic followers to live a life of celibacy and avoid all contact with women. Non-ascetic men and women were separated in temples and during *satsang*. As a believer in non-violence towards all forms of life, Sahajanand preached against female infanticide. He considered female infanticide the highest of crimes since the perpetrator was guilty of three murders, that of an individual, a woman and a family member. Sahajanand's stance on female infanticide caught British attention resulting in a meeting between him and Sir John Malcolm, the Governor of Bombay from 1827-30, at the residence of the political agent of Kathiawad on February 26, 1830. The Sahajanand-Malcolm meeting figures prominently in the historical memory of the Swaminarayan sect with portraits pertaining to it displayed in many of its temples. Members of the sect maintain that Pax Swaminarayana was more effective than Pax Britannica in bringing about a positive transformation in Gujarati society during the first three decades of the nineteenth century.[17] What "positive transformation" are they talking about? What is the meaning of Pax Swaminarayana and how did it influence Gujarati society?

With the decline of Mughal control in India, many regions experienced periods of warfare between emerging regional powers. In Saurashtra, political instability was due to

[16] Ibid., p. 13-16.
[17] Ibid., p. 12.

various Rajput and Kathi chiefs declaring independence from the Mughal governor of Ahmedabad and attempting to increase their territorial holdings. In addition, there were constant Maratha raids throughout the second half of the eighteenth century. By early nineteenth century, local chiefs, the Gaekwad of Baroda, and the Peshwa at Pune, all contested political power in the region. Major Alexander Walker led the Company army into Saurashtra to reach a revenue settlement amongst the chiefs and the Gaekwad. After the 1807 Walker settlement the Gaekwad no longer needed to send his *mulkgiri* army to demand revenue. Residents of Saurashtra strongly disliked *mulkgiri* expeditions as violence, destruction and extortion followed in their wake. Britain's success at becoming the paramount power in Gujarat by 1825 and convincing or threatening chiefs to give up their political ambitions and maintaining the status quo has gone down in imperial history as victory for law and order. Nineteenth-century accounts herald the British as bringers of peace, rescuing the besieged population from intermittent war. The people of Saurashtra have a slightly different memory. Followers of Sahajanand and even many non-followers believe that it was Sahajanand's teachings along with the British presence that influenced the socio-political culture of early nineteenth-century Saurashtra.

In addition to lawlessness, the first three decades of nineteenth century experienced famines, droughts, death due to disease and starvation, earthquakes, crop-eating locusts and a comet sighting.[18] These natural calamities and events were culturally interpreted as signs of *kali yuga*. In this doomsday scenario Sahajanand preached a message borrowed from the eleventh-century philosopher Ramanuja. Keeping in line

[18] Amarji, *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, p. 208-09, 231.

with Vaishnav beliefs, Sahajanand's followers regarded him as an *avatar* (incarnation) of Vishnu working to bring peace and order in times of chaos. During times of severe famine, Sahajanand's ascetic disciples distributed food grains in the affected areas.[19] Many of Sahajanand's followers came from lower castes and tribal groups who were not part of caste Hindu society. His audience consisted of members of the Vama-Marga Shakti cult (worshipped a female goddess) who took part in rituals that included animal sacrifices, meat-eating, drinking intoxicants and liberal sexual mores.[20] To them, Sahajanand brought his message of non-violence, vegetarianism, temperance and strict separation of sexes in public arena. He opposed animal sacrifices by arguing that they were not part of the true Vedic religion. Sahajanand also received Kathi and Kunbi converts and asked them to stop the practice of female infanticide common among some members of the community.

The British valued Sahajanand's work among the militarized Kathi and Shakti cults. Members of these groups often formed militia that served various Rajput, Muslim and Kathi princes. By asking them to give up a life of violence Sahajanand was making Britain's attempts at demilitarization easier. Christian missionaries admired Sahajanand's puritanical tendencies and mistakenly believed that he preached monotheism. Sahajanand did ask his followers to give up "false gods" – tribal and religious deities – and criticized their belief in magic. Christian missionaries deduced from these statements that the Swaminarayan sect was either monotheistic or on the path to such a vision of the divine.

---

[19] Williams, *Introduction to Swaminarayan Hinduism*, p. 24.
[20] Ibid., p. 28.

This was far from true as Sahajanand promoted worship of select Hindu gods: Narayana or Krishna being the primary one followed by Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesh, Parvati and Surya. Working within a traditional framework Sahajanand emphasized Vedic and Sanskrit religious texts.

While the British political establishment and Christian missionaries valued Sahajanand for different reasons, there was one issue on which everyone's interests combined – female infanticide. There was a consensus among British officials not to interfere excessively in Indian religious customs. As a proponent of the practice of indirect rule, Governor Malcolm wanted the development of liberal forms of government in the princely territories of Kutch and Saurashtra at minimum cost to the colonial state. Sahajanand's teachings served the colonial state's political as well as social purposes. When they found a religious leader who spoke out against female infanticide and pacified the "criminal tribes", the British encouraged and supported him. The meeting between Malcolm and Sahajanand at Rajkot in 1830 was a sign of British support for the new sect. Sahajanand gave Malcolm a copy of the *Shikshapatri* which is preserved at the India Institute Library of the Bodleian at Oxford.[21] As a new power in Gujarat the British were keen on ingratiating themselves with friendly elements. The British Collector of Ahmedabad gave Sahajanand land to build the first Swaminarayan temple in 1820.[22] As a leader of a new sect, Sahajanand too was in need of friends. Due to threats of physical

[21] Sahajanand wrote the *Shikshapatri* in 1826 as a book of regulations for his devotees. It consists of 212 Sanskrit verses.

[22] Williams, *Introduction to Swaminarayan Hinduism*, p. 29.

violence from his opponents Sahajanand travelled with a retinue of bodyguards.[23] For a man facing constant attacks from his opposition, support from a rising political power was not to be spurned. During his time in Gujarat Sahajanand met with various British administrators and Christian missionaries, all of them spoke highly of him. In the Sahajanand-Malcolm alliance we see the codependent relationship between the new religious leader and the emerging political power in Gujarat.

Sahajanand also helped indirectly to fulfill Company's political goals in the peninsula. Britain's primary objective in Saurashtra was securing the cotton trade. A society with constant conflicts is not conducive to commerce, giving Company officials an incentive to demilitarize the local population. By attacking violence, looting, killing, abduction of cattle and thereby pacifying the population of Gujarat, Sahajanand indirectly worked towards colonial interests and consolidating British hold over the region. Hence the much talked about symbiotic relationship between the British and the Swaminarayan sect. When members of the Swaminarayan Sampradaya talk about the positive transformation of Gujarati society under the tutelage of Sahajanand, they are referring to his successful Sanskritization[24] of lower castes. The British on the other hand were more interested in his opposition to female infanticide and his ability to pacify "criminal tribes," identified as a source of instability by the colonial state. Social reform in this instance was mixed with strengthening political control.

---

[23] Ibid., p. 22-23.

[24] Sanskritization is the process by which a lower caste Hindu or a person belonging to any other community adopts the customs, rituals, ideologies, and way of life of upper caste Hindus in an attempt to move up the caste hierarchy. Usually sub-caste groups go through Sanskritization as a community in a transformational process that continues for at least a generation.

The British often referred to Sahajanand as a social reformer because of his stance on female infanticide. Sahajanand was a transitional reformer. His message was one of Sanskritization as opposed to western-inspired social reform. Transitional socio-religious movements often connected pre-colonial society to the colonial era. The Swaminarayan movement is a perfect example of a transitional movement since Sahajanand's life coincided with the establishment of British rule in India. Sahajanand's message had purely indigenous origins with no colonial influence unlike the later day acculturative reformers that emerged from the colonial milieu.

Despite British categorization, Sahajanand was not a liberal reformer. He supported caste hierarchy and strict separation of the sexes. Yet, he is important to the study of social reform in Gujarat as his view of Hinduism matched that of late nineteenth-century reformers. Even though the Swaminarayan sect was a transitional movement, it laid the groundwork for acculturative social reformers in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the upcoming chapters I will consider western-educated Indian social reformers. These men and women were inspired to act by their contact with the western world. Yet, the Gujarati society that received the teachings of these acculturative reformers had been previously molded in a favorable manner by the transitional Sahajanand. Both transitional and acculturative reformers believed in the superiority of Vedic religion to popular religion. Both worked to promote upper caste practices among the lower castes. And both were concerned with the position of women in society.[25]

[25] Liberal reformers and Sahajanand opposed female infanticide and widow immolation. To give widows a purpose in life Sahajanand allowed those who wanted to live as ascetics to become his disciples. While formal initiation into asceticism was limited to men, female ascetics (unlike lay women) were

The Swaminarayan Sampradaya with its emphasis on discipline, self-control, stricter sexual mores and curtailing excessive ritualism shared many commonalities with mid to late nineteenth-century reform movements. These values appealed to the middle class sentiments of nineteenth-century reformers who came from upper caste backgrounds. While examining the influence of the British presence on Gujarati social reformers we should remember that teachings of transitional reformers did not die with the advent of British rule. Mid-late nineteenth-century reformist ideas taking root in Gujarati society were not just born out of interactions with Western culture but were also influenced by the environment created in the early nineteenth century by the establishment of the Swaminarayan Sampradaya.

Similarities between transitional and acculturative movements existed across India. In 1829, a year before Sahajanand's demise, Rammohan Roy, one of the most famous Indian social reformers started the Brahmo Sabha which later became the Brahmo Samaj. Under the influence of Unitarianism, Brahmos attacked popular religion preferring Vedantic (Upanishadic tradition) Hinduism instead.[26] They argued that Brahmoism, a religion free from rituals, myths and superstitions, was the true Hindu faith. The reformist Brahmos of eastern India had no connection with the traditionalist Sahajanand of western India, but they both believed that Sanskritized Hinduism was the truest form of the religion. Four decades after Sahajanand's death Dayanand Saraswati (1824-83), founder of the Arya Samaj, visited Calcutta and lived among Brahmos for

---

allowed in the company of male ascetics provided they kept a physical distance. Williams, *Introduction to Swaminarayan Hinduism*, p. 28-9.

[26] Kopf, *Brahmo Samaj*.

four months.[27] This visit changed Dayanand's outlook on social reform. Previously he had mainly preached among a Brahman audience and preferred Sanskrit to the vernacular, now he started working among English educated non-Brahmans and used Hindi. Similar to Sahajanand and the Brahmos, Dayanand also believed that Sanskritized Hinduism was the highest form of the religion.

Acculturative reformers were also influenced by colonial knowledge emerging from Orientalist scholarship. Orientalists elevated Brahmanical texts as the original source of Hinduism. By canonizing Hindu scriptures, Orientalists transformed a fragmented, largely oral set of traditions into an unchanging written form.[28] They worked from the presumption that the ultimate source of religious beliefs and practices are the scriptures. Orientalists compared deistic ideas found in the Puranas and Upanishads to popular religion in the late 1700s and concluded that the "original and pure" religion had become "corrupted" over the years and was now full of superstitions. The disconnect between scriptural religion and customary practices was explained as a fall from the "golden age." Enlightenment belief in a pristine religion later debased by superstitions influenced the Orientalist construction of an Indian golden age. Another equally important factor was the Puranic notion of a *krta* or *satya yuga* from which society progressively worsened until it got to the present *kali yuga*. Enlightenment and Puranic ideas combined gave birth to the idea of the Indian golden age and the confinement of

---

[27] Jones, *Arya Dharm.*

[28] Van der Veer, *"*The Foreign Hand*,"* in *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*, ed. Breckenridge and Van der Veer, p. 23-44.

"true" religion to scriptures.[29] Orientalists gave primacy to scriptural forms of Hinduism over customary practices and in turn elevated the Brahmanical texts.

While acculturative reformers undoubtedly emerged from the colonial environment, they were also channeling the transitional reformers. The core message of both transitional and acculturative reform movements was reverence for scriptural religion and contempt for popular practices. Sahajanand worked among tribals and lower castes to promote Swaminarayan religious and cultural practices. In transitional as well as acculturative reformers we see a concentrated effort to promote certain values among their audience. The main difference between the two was in the acculturative movement's promotion of literacy and education as the vehicle for social reform, an effect of the heavy influence of Protestant values on acculturative philosophy. What caused British and Indian reformers to place emphasis on literacy and education? To answer the question we now shift to the era of acculturative social and religious reform, a time when Indian reformers emerged from the colonial milieu. While affected by European criticisms of Indian cultures and religions, native social reformers orchestrated reformist policies in tune with Indian sensitivity. Indian reformers did not blindly follow their European counterparts. Just as Dayanand started a new brand of Hinduism based on his interpretation of the scriptures, Indian reformers indigenized European ideas.

[29] Rocher, "British Orientalism in the Eighteenth Century," in *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament,* ed. Breckenridge and Van der Veer p. 215-49.

Education as the Vehicle for Social Reform

Despite help from Sahajanand and a few Rajput princes, the British had limited success ending the practice of female infanticide. Frustrated with lack of progress, reformers proposed another tactic, ending female infanticide by increasing the value of women in society. Reverend John Wilson called for "moral regeneration" of Saurashtra's inhabitants. Education was the vehicle through which the "morally bankrupt" society would regenerate. Proposing education as the cure for India's ills is consistent with the imperial mindset prevalent in other parts of India. On becoming the Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck listened to the wishes of his evangelical brethren back home and focused on social change in India. Thomas Babington Macaulay's 1835 Minute on Education made a strong argument on behalf of the Anglicists on the benefits of imparting an English education to select Indians. This elite would serve as the intermediaries between the foreign rulers and the uneducated population, thereby strengthening English rule. Indians educated in schools proposed by Macaulay would be English in manners and custom; they would be "brown Englishmen" loyal to Britain. The 1830s started the era of strong evangelical and Anglicist influence in India.

Britain's educational policy remained constant throughout the nineteenth century. While the newly established British Raj back tracked on taxation policies and land reform after the Revolt of 1857, on matters of education, policies set in motion before the Revolt continued on after the uprising. In 1837, the Kathiawar Agency opened its first vernacular school in Rajkot, the capital city of Saurashtra. In 1842, the Irish Presbyterian mission of Rajkot started its own school teaching classes in Gujarati and English. In

1846, Colonel Lang, a champion of education, became the political agent in Kathiawad. During his tenure Lang established the Central English School at Rajkot in 1853. The school was later renamed Alfred High School and is now known as the Mahatma Gandhi High School after its most famous pupil. Lang was a proponent of vernacular education over English education. Due to scarce financial support for female education, Lang used his own money to start a school for girls in Rajkot in 1855. With a substantial increase in the number of schools there was now a need for teachers trained in imparting western-style education. This led to opening of the Hunter Training College for men in 1866 and the Barton Female Training College in 1885, both located in Rajkot.[30] Proponents of education in Saurashtra stressed greater focus on the vernaculars as early as the 1830s and continued to do so even after the Revolt.

While carrying out various reformist projects, the Kathiawar Agency took steps to involve Indians. The British found allies in reformist *diwans* such as Gaorishankar Oza of Bhavnagar. In 1850s, Oza started vernacular schools in Bhavnagar city, Mahuva and key areas across the state. The precedent to include Indians was set by Governor Malcolm and his predecessor Mountstuart Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay from 1819-27. Elphinstone assumed governorship after the annexation of the Maratha territories in 1818. He incorporated Indian elites into the Company administration to smooth the transition from Maratha to British rule. As Governors of newly acquired territories, Elphinstone and Malcolm believed in preserving indigenous forms of administration. The policy of

[30] *A Manual of Karbharis' Meeting of Kathiawar States, 1870-1940* (Rajkot: G.K. Shingala Printing Press, 1940), p. 89-91.

placating native leaders and supporting their institutions was a safeguard against rebellions by the newly defeated.

Social reformers in the 1830s continued the policy of involving natives in reformist causes. To this end Elphinstone College was established in 1834 in Bombay to provide an English education to Indian men. Elphinstone graduates formed the first generation of Western-educated men in the Bombay Presidency. These men would have made Macaulay proud as they personified his hopes of an English-educated Indian elite. Elphinstone graduates laid their mark on the political, social and cultural life of Bombay Presidency through their illustrious careers as civil administrators, educationists, journalists and social reformers.[31] The government encouraged these men to be involved in social causes. One such individual was Bhau Daji, an assistant teacher at Elphinstone.[32] In 1844, the Kathiawar Agency circulated Gujarati translations of Bhau Daji's prize winning essay on the evils of female infanticide in Saurashtra and Kutch.[33] Elphinstone College had various such competitions where participants wrote essays on social reformist topics.[34] This was a way to get Indians involved in the reformist project as their participation added legitimacy to the cause. From the earliest days of colonial rule, English as well as non-English educated Indians carried out social and religious reform within their communities in order to adjust to the colonial environment.

---

[31] Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India*, p. 27-52.

[32] While a student at Elphinstone, Bhau Daji's colleagues included Dadabhai Naoroji and Atmaram Pandurang Tarkhadar. Bhau Daji went on to graduate from Grant Medical College and became a medical practitioner. Tarkhadar, inspired by the Brahmos, founded the Prarthana Samaj.

[33] Wilson, *Suppression of Infanticide*, p. 326.

[34] Another famous essay: Cooverjee Rustomjee Mody, *Essay on Female Infanticide* (Bombay: Bombay Education Society's Press, 1849).

While Elphinstone College encouraged its faculty and students to be involved in public causes, it was a western-style higher learning institution teaching in English. This was in tune with the education policy set in 1830s that concentrated on imparting English education to select Indians. Macaulay and his Anglicist friends believed the classical languages were anachronistic in the modern era thereby disqualifying them as languages of higher learning.[35] The vernaculars, suffering from years of neglect, did not have the appropriate vocabulary or grammatical structure to do the job. English was deemed to be the only suitable language for imparting enlightened western ideas to the Indian population. Missionaries and social reformers agreed with Macaulay's view of Indian languages, yet many did not agree with Macaulay's downward filtration model. They doubted that an elite group of English-educated Indians would be successful in transferring western knowledge to the bulk of the population. Instead of English, the vernaculars would be more effective in gaining access to the Indian masses. The key was to cultivate the vernaculars by borrowing vocabulary from the classics and encourage educated Indians to enrich the body of literature by writing suitable works of fiction and non-fiction.

Narmadshankar Lalshankar Dave (1833-1886), a Nagar Brahman[36] and an Elphinstone college graduate, used his western education to compile *Narmakosh*, a

---

[35] Thomas Babington Macaulay, "*Minute on Education*," in Selections from Educational Records, Part I (1781-1839), ed. H. Sharp (Calcutta: Superintendent, Government Printing, 1920. Reprint. Delhi: National Archives of India, 1965), p. 107-117.

[36] Before the advent of British rule, Nagar Brahmans occupied key administrative positions at various courts in Gujarat. This practice continued throughout nineteenth well into the twentieth century. Under British rule, Nagars quickly took to western education, graduating from British institutions and occupying important posts in the colonial and princely state administrations.

Gujarati-Gujarati dictionary. Narmad based *Narmakosh* on Webster's English dictionary and a Marathi-English dictionary.[37] Inspired by his Western and Maharashtrian counterparts, Narmad believed that a dictionary reflected the greatness of a language, making it imperative to create a composite data bank for Gujarati vocabulary. Narmad's contemporary reformers based in Bombay and Ahmedabad started Gujarati language newspapers and journals to promote their message. Dadabhai Naoroji started a journal named *Rast Goftar* in 1851 with key reformers such as Karsandas Mulji[38] (1832-1871) as contributors.

In 1854, the Court of Directors of the English East India Company approved Sir Charles Wood's Educational Dispatch which proposed broad systematic changes. Wood's dispatch had three main provisions: introduction of the grants-in-aid system; a plan to start three universities at Bombay, Calcutta and Madras; creation of separate education departments in each province. The grants-in-aid system enabled the Department of Public Instruction to give financial grants to private institutions, most of whom used vernaculars as the language of instruction. As per the 1854 dispatch, the government recognized the need to encourage education at all levels in the vernacular languages instead of just focusing on higher level education in English. Individual agencies had already come to such a conclusion since the Kathiawar Agency opened its first vernacular school in Rajkot as early as 1837. Similar to championing the fight against female infanticide, in matters of vernacular education the lower level agencies

[37] Riho Isaka, "Language and Dominance: The Debates over the Gujarati Language in the Late Nineteenth Century," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 25:1, p. 8.

[38] Karsandas Mulji, a friend of Narmad, was also an Elphinstone College graduate.

were taking the initiative to set policy. The upper echelons of imperial leadership often came to the same conclusions after observing the steps taken by their subordinates as the latter were in direct touch with the bulk of the native population.

Multi-Caste Aspect of Social Reform

In 1848, a few years before Wood's dispatch, Alexander Kinloch Forbes[39] started the Gujarat Vernacular Society (from here on GVS) in Ahmedabad. The goal of this organization was to encourage the development of the Gujarati language and literature. If students were to be educated in the vernacular, the language in question had to meet appropriate standards. Initially headed by a European committee, within a few years Gujarati intellectuals assumed control of GVS. They turned GVS into an organization through which Gujarati elites asserted their cultural and social dominance in the region.[40] The intelligentsia with the support of the mercantile community turned GVS into a representative body of Gujaratis. Prominent members were Brahmans, especially Nagar Brahmans, and Hindu Vanias and Jain Vanias, both mercantile castes.

The Vania presence played a key role in the formulation of Gujarati identity with Brahman intellectuals referring to Gujarat as the land of merchants. At a paper presented before the Wilson Literacy Society in Bombay, the novelist and poet Govardhanram Tripathi gave the following description of Gujarat: "The province has always yielded a

[39] Alexander Forbes (1821-1865), a Haileybury graduate, was an Assistant Judge in Ahmedabad. Forbes started the Gujarati Sabha in Bombay in 1864, later renamed the Forbes Gujarati Sabha, to promote Gujarati literature.

[40] Riho Isaka, "Gujarati Elites and the Construction of a Regional Identity in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *Beyond Representation: Colonial and Postcolonial Constructions of Indian Identity*, ed. Crispin Bates (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 153.

rich harvest of merchants who covered not only the whole of India, but traveled beyond the seas. These children of industry and enterprise are soft and gentle at home, and the poetry of the Vaishnava religion had, by the laws of selection, special charm for them."[41] Indian rulers also supported GVS with many becoming members for life.[42] Unlike the intelligentsia they were not active members, but GVS could call upon them when funds were needed. While in Bengal and northern India the English-educated middle class led the charge of social reform, in Gujarat the non-English educated mercantile castes played a key role in promoting the liberal reformist agenda. The mercantile castes through their direct involvement in reformist projects played an important role in the formation of modern Gujarati society.

The famous poet Dalpatram Dahyabhai (1820-1898), a close friend of Forbes[43], was involved with the GVS since its early days. Dalpatram, a Shrimali Brahman from Wadhwan in Saurashtra, belonged to the Swaminarayana Sampradaya.[44] Unlike his

---

[41] Govardhanram Madhavram Tripathi, *The Classical Poets of Gujarat* (Bombay: Forbes Gujarati Sabha, Third Edition, 1958 (1894)), p. 56. This essay is based on a speech given by Tripathi in 1892 on "The Classical Poets of Gujarat and their Influence on Society and Morals." Tripathi was a famous poet and novelist. He was also the first president of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, an organization started in 1905 to recover and revive the history, literature and culture of Gujarat. See chapter 5 and Sudhir Chandra, *The Oppressive Present: Literature and Social Consciousness in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992) for a gendered analysis of Tripathi's views on social reform.

[42] R.L. Raval, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in Gujarat During the Nineteenth Century* (New Delhi: Ess Ess Publications, 1987), p. 120.

[43] Dalpatram started as Forbes's assistant, helping him learn the Gujarati language. This relationship blossomed into a partnership that produced the *Ras Mala: Hindu Annals of Western India* in 1856. For the *Ras Mala*, Dalpatram and Forbes toured Saurashtra collecting old manuscripts, noting inscriptions, consulting Bhats and Charans, who served as bards and royal genealogists. Also see Aparna Kapadia, "Alexander Forbes and the Making of a Regional History," in *The Idea of Gujarat: History, Ethnography and Text*, ed. Edward Simpson and Aparna Kapadia (New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2010), p. 50-65.

[44] Dalpatram's maternal uncle was a follower of Sahajanand Swami. It was he who introduced Dalpatram to the relatively new religion. Dalpatram started his poetic career by writing poems in *Braj*

contemporaries in Bombay, Dalpatram never received a formal western education. Yet, he understood the impact of western education and technology on India. He wrote poetry and essays in Gujarati on topics of the time such as child marriage, widow remarriage and caste. Influenced by the commercial climate of Gujarat, Dalpatram wrote his most famous poem, *Hunnar Khanni Chadhai* (Attack of King Industry), where he criticized Indians for allowing "King Industry" (Britain) to rule India. He held Indian customs, superstitions and ignorance responsible for the decline of native industries. The only way for India to extricate itself from the deplorable situation where Britain drained India's wealth was through education, self-awakening and industrialization. It is remarkable that as early as 1851 Dalpatram recognized the threat posed by an industrialized Britain to India. Living in Ahmedabad, a city with a rich mercantile culture, Dalpatram astutely predicted India's need to industrialize in order to regain its prosperity. *Hunnar Khanni Chadhai* received a favorable reception, with the published version going through forty editions within a few decades.[45]

While social reformers in other parts of India focused exclusively on topics such as education or widow remarriage, Dalpatram also commented on India's dire financial straits. Economic nationalists towards the end of nineteenth century would echo Dalpatram with the "drain of wealth" theory propagated by Romesh Chunder Dutt and

---

Bhasa praising Sahajanand. N.A. Toothi, *The Vaishnavas of Gujarat: Being a Study in Methods of Investigation of Social Phenomena* (Calcutta; New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1935), p. 269.

[45] Achyut Yagnik and Suchitra Sheth, *The Making of Modern Gujarat: Plurality, Hindutva and Beyond* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2005), p. 299.

Dadabhai Naoroji.[46] Dalpatram understood the negative effects of British imperialism long before the economic nationalists as he lived in a city that had suffered because of the colonial economy. Coming from a Brahman family, Dalpatram had no background in commerce, yet he had an awareness of the business sphere due to his interactions with the mercantile castes. He cultivated alliances with wealthy businessmen of Ahmedabad who donated generously to GVS. Despite mercantile castes' hesitancy towards liberal education, Dalpatram wooed them as he knew that for any societal change to be implemented he would need the backing of all elite Gujaratis. Unlike his contemporary and rival poet Narmad, Dalpatram did not envision radical change in Gujarati society.[47] His long tenure as the assistant secretary of GVS (from 1855-79) was possible because of his moderate approach towards reform.

In 1849, GVS started the first girls' school in Ahmedabad courtesy of Harkunvar Shethani, widow of Hathisinh Kesrisinh, who assumed complete financial responsibility for the school.[48] Following Harkunvar Shethani's example other members of the commercial castes also stepped forward to support educational endeavors.[49] Performing acts of *seva* (religious or social service) was a part of Gujarati mercantile ethos.[50] In pre-colonial times merchants chose religious bodies as recipients of their charity. In the mid-

[46] Romesh Chunder Dutt, *The Economic History of India, Vol. II* (Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India, 1960 reprint, original 1904); Dadabhai Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* (Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India, 1962 reprint, original 1901).

[47] Raval, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in Gujarat*, p. 123-27.

[48] Hathisinh Kesrisinh, a Jain, made a fortune from the Opium trade. His widow used a portion of the profits from Opium trade to finance the first school for girls in the city.

[49] One such individual was the fabulously wealthy Jain financier and mill-owner Maganbhai Karamchand.

[50] Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat*, p. 79; Haynes, "From Tribute to Philanthropy," p. 343. See chapter 6 for why merchants supported reformist efforts enacted by princely states and British authorities in colonial India.

nineteenth century, at the imperial government's urging a few wealthy merchants started donating to educational institutions. Though they patronized schools or supported poor students through scholarships, merchants were not interested in providing their own sons (and definitely not daughters) with a liberal education. The Director of Public Instruction lamented in 1861 "that the wealthy natives of Bombay, as a class, do not care to give their sons the education of a gentlemen."[51] The Gujarati merchants of Ahmedabad shared their Bombay brethren's lack of interest in liberal education. Yet, they too gradually patronized education.

The shift from religious to secular philanthropy might seem radical at first, especially when one takes into account the fact that the commercial castes did not embrace western education as readily as Brahmans.[52] But when we consider the leadership role assumed by *mahajans* throughout Gujarat's history the shift emerges as a natural progression. It is no surprise that wealthy businessmen (and women) supported GVS as the organization had become the representative body of Gujaratis. When Harkunvar Shethani financed the girls' school she was only doing her traditional duty as a member of the city's first family[53] by assuming a leadership position. By supporting

---

[51] Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India*, p. 33.

[52] Parsis are an important exception to this rule. They were a commercial caste who embraced Western education enthusiastically from the earliest days.

[53] Harkunvar Shethani's father Khushalchand Vakhatchand was the *nagarsheth* of Ahmedabad. The *nagarsheth* served as the leader of the city, a mayor of sorts. He headed the city organization whose members consisted of representatives from all the different *mahajans* (merchant guilds) functioning in the city. In Ahmedabad the position of *nagarsheth* was hereditary and he came from the Jain community. Harkunvar Shethani's husband was also a powerful man because of his wealth and religious philanthropy among the Jain community. Gillion, *Ahmedabad*, p. 55-56.

public causes, elite Gujaratis were fulfilling their duty of performing *seva* and in turn enhancing their social status.

The imperial government encouraged Indians to build schools, hospitals and support acts of public service like their counterparts in Victorian England. Gujarati merchants did so following their tradition of patronizing causes important to their rulers.[54] During pre-colonial times Gujarati merchants established clientage ties with the Mughal rulers by paying tribute. In the colonial era they showed their acceptance of imperial authority by supporting philanthropic activities espoused by the British. Mercantile policy of using philanthropy as diplomacy was common to Gujarati merchants of all faiths: Hindus, Jains, Sunnis, Shias and Parsis. By supporting causes important to the British rulers and the Gujarati intelligentsia (mainly Brahmans at this point), the mercantile castes were strengthening cross-communal relations. For any radical change to be accepted by the broader society, it needed the backing of all dominant communities. In nineteenth-century Gujarat that included the Brahman intelligentsia and mercantile castes.

By supporting their rulers and the Brahman castes, Gujarati merchants were carrying out their civic duty. As prominent members of Gujarati society they were expected to assume leadership positions. Gujarati merchants enhanced their social prominence through philanthropic projects.[55] The non-commercial Gujarati Brahmans were well aware of the value of cross-caste partnership and their need for financial

[54] Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual*, p. 60-61.

[55] Gujaratis were not the only ones who used their philanthropic projects to gain social prominence. Rudner, *Caste and Capitalism* and Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen, and Bazaars* examine mercantile ethos in South and North India respectively.

support from the Hindu and Jain Vanias. Manilal Dwivedi, a Nagar Brahman scholar, led a project to preserve, translate and publish Jain manuscripts.[56] Literary projects chosen by Brahman scholars often reflected the heritage of their Jain and Vaishnav sponsors. The reformist project in Gujarat was a multi-caste endeavor from the beginning through the merger of the intelligentsia and the mercantile castes.

In princely Saurashtra, there was a third angle to the multi-caste equation: the Rajput Rajas and Muslim Nawabs. Since Saurashtra was under indirect British rule, there existed an indigenous ruling class, unlike areas of direct rule where it had been replaced by the colonial state. The princes had no external powers to wage wars or carryout diplomatic relations with other states. What they did have were powers to set internal policy in conjunction with the powerful Diwan (Prime Minister) known in some states as Vazir. In such an environment princes set forward a domestic agenda of education and reform to assert their sovereignty and relevance. Usually the *diwan* had free reign over all state matters with his office overseeing the entire administration. Involvement of the prince in daily state affairs depended on the individual's personality. Raja Bhagvatsinh of Gondal was one of the few princes who took an active role in the state administration. In Bhavnagar state, the second largest state in Saurashtra, Gaorishankar Oza was the most powerful man during his tenure as the *diwan* from 1847-79. He served as *diwan* under Raja Jaswantsinh and as the Indian Administrator[57] during Raja Takhtsinh's (Jaswantsinh's son) minority rule. Oza worked with the colonial power on policies that

[56] Isaka, "Gujarati Elites and the Construction of a Regional Identity," in *Beyond Representation*, ed. Bates, p. 156.

[57] In cases of minority rule in princely states, the British often appointed a joint administration consisting of an Indian and a British administrator.

benefited Bhavnagar and protested or acquiesced to those that did not. His contemporaries compared Oza to Diwan T. Madhav Rao of Baroda and Diwan Salar Jung of Hyderabad for ensuring an amicable relationship between the princely state and British India.[58]

Gaorishankar Oza accepted the new political scenario in Saurashtra that left the British as the paramount power. Under his direction Bhavnagar remained loyal to the English East India Company during the 1857 Revolt.[59] He willingly supported British pet projects such as improving communications; after all, an increase in trade helped local merchants as well as the Company. With the Bombay government's aggressive push for expansion of railway lines in Saurashtra, Oza supported the building of a line from Bhavnagar to Wadhwan (border city between British and princely Gujarat).[60] When it came to imperial policies that disadvantaged Bhavnagar, Oza vociferously opposed their implementation. The cause of friction between many princely states of Saurashtra and the Bombay government was the British monopoly over opium and salt.[61] Oza, along with various *diwans* in the region opposed this policy which hurt the princely states financially. Mohandas Gandhi famously capitalized on the unpopular government monopoly over salt in the famous 1930 Satyagraha. But Gujarat's princely states had been opposing British monopoly over salt since 1878. Oza managed to get support from

[58] T.J. Bennet, Editor, *The Times of India*, Bombay, November 16, 1887.
[59] Yagnik, *Gaorishankar Udayashankar*, p. 48-49.
[60] Ibid., p. 71.
[61] Ibid., p. 113; K.V. Mehta, *Gaurishankar Udaishankar Oza*, p. 319-24.

none other than Dadabhai Naoroji who agreed with the stance taken by Bhavnagar.[62] In 1883, the princely states signed a treaty with the colonial government under which they were exempted from paying a tax on salt provided they did not export it to British India.[63] Oza understood the new political reality and willingly worked with the British when it suited Bhavnagar's interests and opposed the colonial government when needed.

Gaorishankar Oza was a curious blend of tradition and modernity. He oversaw the beginnings of a formal education system in Bhavnagar state. Under his *diwani*, vernacular and Anglo-vernacular schools started across the state, including schools for girls. In the mid-nineteenth century, the key purpose of liberal education was to prepare men for state service across India. With this objective in mind Oza started vernacular schools in Bhavnagar and other towns across the state in 1856, earning praise from the Bombay government.[64] This pioneer of liberal education never learned English. The only formal education he received was up to the primary level in his village of Gogha. Despite his traditional background, Oza recognized the need for providing formal education to boys in his state if they were to secure employment in the changing political scenario. He placed his son Vijayshankar under the tutelage of Reverend Wallace Mackie, a Christian clergyman in Gogha.[65] These lessons ended prematurely due to opposition, presumably to the involvement of a clergyman in the teaching arrangement. Even the secular schools

---

[62] Letter exchange between Gaorishankar Oza and Dadabhai Naoroji, July-August 1880 in K.V. Mehta, *Gaurishankar Udaishankar Oza,* p. 413-14.

[63] Ibid., p. 324.

[64] Sir Theodore Hope, Educational Inspector of the Northern Division of the Bombay Presidency praised Oza in his 1855-56 Report. J.B. Peile, political agent in Kathiawad, also praised Bhavnagar state's education policy in 1859. Yagnik, *Gaorishankar Udayashankar*, p. 47-48.

[65] S.S. Mehta, *A Biographical Sketch of Vijayshanker Gaorishanker Oza* (Bhavnagar, 1935), p. 4.

often met with suspicion as they were seen as being tied to the foreign British. Oza's backing for new schools did help in making them more palatable to the local population, but the opposition still remained.

After long service to Bhavnagar state, Oza retired once Takhtsinh, Jaswantsinh's son, came of age and ascended the *gadi* (throne). During his retirement Oza took to studying Vedantic philosophy and wrote commentaries in Gujarati.[66] He published *Svarupanusandhana*[67] (considerations on the nature of Self (*atma*)). A few years into retirement, aware of his old age, Oza chose to enter the last *asrama* (stage) of life and became a *sanyasi* (ascetic). He was initiated into the *sanyasi* order as Swami Sachchidanand Saraswati.[68] Oza had received a CSI (Companion of the Order of the Star of India) in recognition for Bhavnagar's support for the Company during the 1857 uprising.[69] Oza was probably the first *sanyasi* to also hold a CSI. Here was a man who introduced trappings of modernity such as roads and railways to Bhavnagar, started schools that provided formal education. He initiated these secular policies during his *grihasta asrama* (householder/worldly stage of life). On retirement he turned to the study of religious philosophy and followed the last two *asramas* required of caste Hindus. He

---

[66] Yagnik, *Gaorishankar Udayashankar*, p. 83-84.

[67] Oza sent a copy of his book to Max Mueller who considered it as a valuable gift. Letter from Max Mueller to Gaorishankar Oza, December 5, 1884. K.V. Mehta, *Gaurishankar Udaishankar Oza*, p. 465-66. Mueller admired Oza as a philosophical thinker. Noted in S.M. Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar* (Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1909), p. 7. Edwardes was an Indian Civil Service officer. He was also the president of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, honorary secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society (Bombay) and Fellow of Bombay University.

[68] Yagnik, *Gaorishankar Udayashankar*, p. 86-87; Mansukhram Suryaram Tripathi, *Shreeman Gaorishankar Udayashankar Oza, CSI, Sankshipt Jivancharitra* (Bhavnagar, 1937), p. 22-23. Tripathi's book is a life-sketch of Oza. See figures 2.1 and 2.2 at the end of this chapter for Oza as the *diwan* and Oza as Swami Sachchidanand Saraswati.

[69] Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar*, p. 90.

also started a *vedshala* (school to teach Vedas) at his expense in 1885.[70] Oza successfully blended the traditional and the modern, secular and religious, in political as well as private life.[71]

Biographies of Oza praise him for bringing the "civilizing agencies" of roads and railways to Bhavnagar. He is remembered for ensuring peace and prosperity by encouraging trade. British accounts praise him for his loyalty to the Empire. What is often lost in a footnote is the radical step taken by Oza to start female education. While schools for boys were of immediate concern and thus high on Oza's priority list, it was in the service of female education that Oza was the most creative, even theatrical. The first school for girls in Bhavnagar started in 1857, only a year after the establishment of the boys' school.[72] Making the girls' school a reality required all of Oza's considerable diplomatic talents. He had to tackle orthodox sections of the population who vehemently opposed female education for multiple reasons, including the belief that literate girls were cursed and would lose their husbands to an untimely death resulting in a long life of widowhood. This was a common belief across India at that time. Not only did most parents refuse to educate their daughters, there was also a significant risk of society ostracizing the select few families who did.

In *The High Caste Hindu Woman*, Pandita Ramabai Saraswati (1858-1922), one of the most provocative female reformers, chronicles the difficulties faced by her father,

---

[70] *Gujarat Shalapatra*, 24:4 (April 1885).

[71] The son Vijayshankar Oza inherited his father's liberal attitude. He started the Gaorishankar Oza scholarship at Grant Medical College, donated money to the building of a hospital in Bhavnagar state, and set up a prize at Central Hindu College, Banaras (later Banaras Hindu University) to encourage study of Vedanta. S.S. Mehta, *Vijayshanker Gaorishanker* Oza, p. 22-24.

[72] K.V. Mehta, *Gaurishankar Udaishankar Oza*, p. 304-09.

Ananta Dongre, when he attempted to teach his young wife Sanskrit. Dongre had to live in a remote location, far away from his family, in order to teach Lakshmibai, Ramabai's mother, Sanskrit.[73] Dongre was only able to live a life on his own terms on leaving the extended family. Oza in Bhavnagar faced the same challenges as Dongre in Pune. Oza's biographers referred to his effort to encourage female education as waging a *yudh* (war) against superstitions prevalent in society.[74]

Oza's determination to take on superstitions that prevented girls from becoming educated came from his study of Indian history. As a student of the ancient texts he was aware of the existence of wise and virtuous women in ancient India. It was time for women of nineteenth century to follow in the footsteps of their ancient sisters and step out of the seclusion and ignorance to which they were relegated as a result of Muslim rule.[75] Oza's view of Indian history was very similar to the Orientalist vision of the Hindu "golden age." Oza believed in the existence of an enlightened ancient India, especially a Hindu India, which had degenerated under Muslim rule. He believed education was the means through which Hindu women could once again be wise and virtuous like their ancient sisters. In chapter 5 I will examine in greater detail the gendered nature of social reform movements in colonial India. For now, it is important to know that for men such as Oza, educated women were the key to revival of Hinduism and regeneration of India.

To start this regeneration of Indian womanhood and thereby the society as a whole, Oza formed a coalition that included the most powerful blocs in the city: Nagar

---

[73] Pandita Ramabai Saraswati, *The High Caste Hindu Woman* (Philadelphia, 1888), p. x-xi.

[74] K.V. Mehta, *Gaurishankar Udaishankar Oza*, p. 306; Yagnik, *Gaorishankar Udayashankar*, p. 48.

[75] K.V. Mehta, *Gaurishankar Udaishankar Oza*, p. 306.

Brahmans, merchants and the royal family. Oza convinced members of his family and caste to send their daughters to the new girls' school located in a building next to his house. After winning the support of his fellow Nagar Brahmans, Oza turned to the prominent merchants in the city and got them to enroll their girls in the school. With the aid of the city merchants and the Nagar Brahman community, Oza was able to open the first girls' school in the state with twenty-five students, including his two daughters aged eight and ten. The school was inaugurated by the six year old Kumari Gaguba, daughter of Raja Jaswantsinh. Oza convinced the king and queen that support by the royal family was imperative in promoting education for girls and removing superstitions associated with literate females.

A large procession carrying Gaguba originated from the *darbargadh* (royal palace) and made its way to the school on inauguration day.[76] The public procession symbolized the Raja and Rani's support for the new girls' school. Ritualized processions were usually carried out to celebrate inauguration of a new king, royal weddings or births, victory after war and religious festivals. Oza took this traditional practice and adapted it for a modern agenda. Residents of Bhavnagar would have recognized the symbolism and message behind the event. Since the procession started at the *darbargadh* and ended at the site of the new girls' school, onlookers would have understood the implicit state backing for the new project. With the six year old princess playing an integral part in the parade, the focus stayed on the issue at hand, building public support for educating girls.

[76] Ibid., p. 306-9; Yagnik, *Gaorishankar Udayashankar*, p. 47-50.

In order to complete the task of supporting female education successfully, even the powerful *diwan* needed the help of the city elite. Promotion of education in Gujarat from its earliest days was a multi-class and multi-caste project where different prominent social groups responded to local needs while drawing ideas from the wider global sphere. The above example highlights the interdependent relationship between elites in Gujarati society. Oza needed the backing of leading city merchants to silence the opposition. The merchants in turn were willing to support him as it was in their interest to maintain a friendly relationship with the *diwan*. After all, Oza had worked to improve roads in and outside Bhavnagar state. The mercantile community welcomed this move as enhanced communication networks foster trade and bring in more business. Bhavnagar had a long history of enacting pro-business policies and making the state attractive for commerce.[77] Relations between Nagars and Vanias were not always cordial as the two castes often competed for influence at the court.[78] But in this instance, Oza was able to get both the communities to work together. And the royal family too joined the alliance, not just to maintain its friendly relationship with the intelligentsia and the merchants, but to also impress the British.

British liberals and Christian missionaries had been pushing education as a means to improve a woman's position in society. By supporting female education Jaswantsinh was making a positive impression on the various reformist minded political agents in the Kathiawar Agency who passed on their favorable views to Bombay in periodic reports.

---

[77] K.V. Mehta, *Gaurishankar Udaishankar Oza*, p. 193-217.
[78] Ibid., p. 112-14.

As the ruler of a premier state in Saurashtra, Jaswantsinh was also trying to keep pace with the rest of Gujarat. The GVS in Ahmedabad started a girls' school in 1849; Colonel Lang opened a school for girls in Rajkot in 1855. By lending his support to the inauguration of a girls' school in 1857, Jaswantsinh was keeping abreast of the wider trend. In addition, there was the Wood's Dispatch of 1854 that called on Company officials to encourage vernacular education and support primary and secondary level schools. Oza's orchestration of his education policy followed the 1854 dispatch. Both the prince and his *diwan* were aware of reformist initiatives started in the native states of Gujarat as well as the British territories and strove to keep up with them, as was expected from men in their position.

Conclusion

Promotion of education in Saurashtra was an off shoot of the broader movement to uplift Indian women and thereby Indian society. What started as a crusade to end female infanticide evolved into support for female education. Facing limited success in their quest to abolish the practice of female infanticide, British political agents and missionaries transferred their energies to changing the Indian mindset by giving them a Western education. Education came to the forefront of imperial consciousness in the 1830s and continued to occupy an elevated position through the rest of the century, undisturbed by the 1857 upheaval. The educational policy set in the halls of Parliament in London focused on higher level education in English. Vernacular and primary education did not receive similar government support until the 1850s. Contrary to the official

picture, at the grass roots level reformists encouraged primary education in the vernacular from the early days. They preceded London in realizing the importance of educating Indians in the vernacular.

Gujarati elites living in British territories or princely states were aware of the changing socio-political scenario in India. They adjusted (sometimes grudgingly) to the changing times by accepting Britain as the dominant political power. The British encouraged Indians to get involved in reformist causes to minimize backlash from the orthodoxy. Starting as subordinates, over time, Indians charted their own reformist agenda. Dalpatram Dahyabhai came to work for the GVS under Alexander Forbes. In time Dalpatram set his own agenda at the GVS and held the reins of the organization. Indian reformers such as Dalpatram and Narmad indigenized Western ideas to make them more attractive to the local population. Gaorishankar Oza used familiar language, rituals, and religious iconography to further female education by organizing a ritualized procession to celebrate the inauguration of the first girls' school in Bhavnagar.

The method used for furthering reformist polices was similar to that applied for enacting any societal change – ensuring the support of all elite communities. In princely Gujarat, the princes, merchants and educated middle class formed the three elite communities. For any reformist idea to take root, it needed the backing of the political, commercial and intellectual blocs of society. Historically, Gujarati merchants have played an integral role in all aspects of society and the same was the case with social reform, making it a multi-class and multi-caste project. In pre-colonial times Gujarati mercantile philanthropy was limited to religious causes. As we will see in subsequent

chapters, the addition of secular causes such as education to the domain of mercantile philanthropy happened during the colonial era.

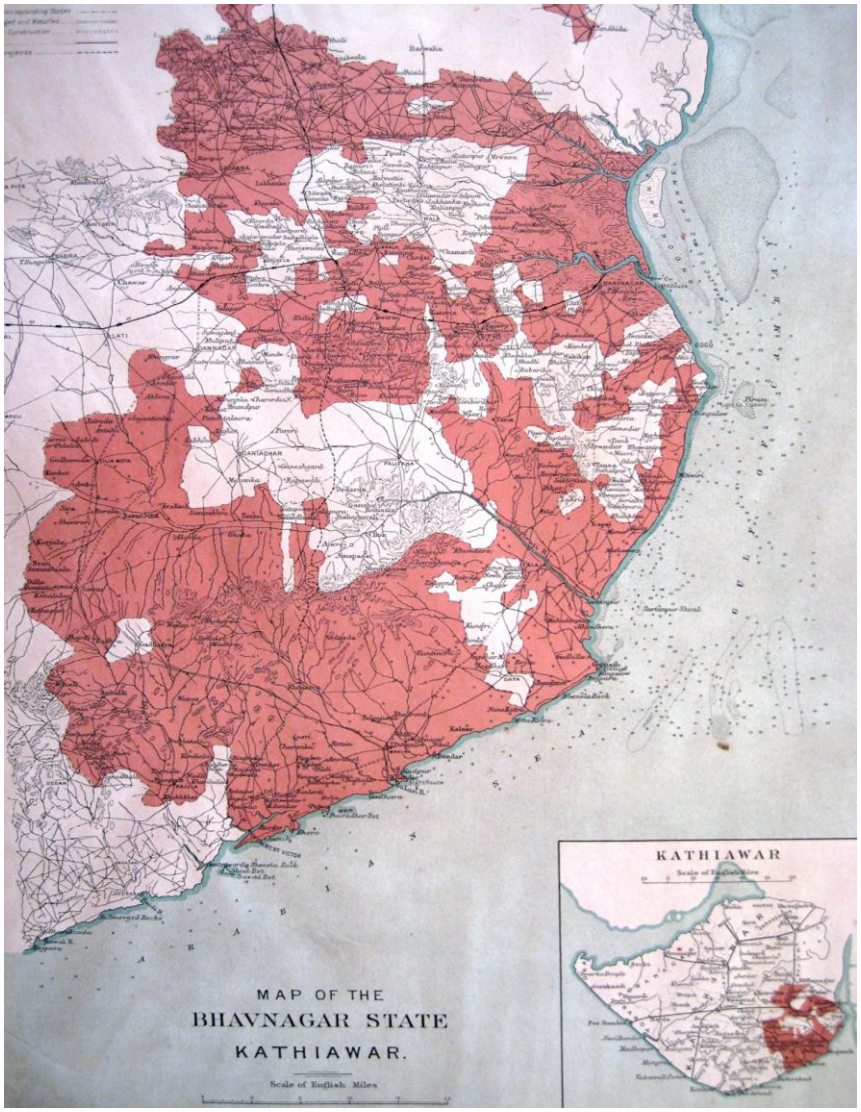
Working with the British towards common goals did not necessarily translate into abandoning one's mission. Sahajanand supported the British in their fight against female infanticide, he welcomed British gifts of land to build temples, but he never deviated from his traditionalist message of Sanskritization. He preferred to work within the Hindu fold and did not adopt the idea of liberal reform. Transitional reformers such as Sahajanand worked in an era when the Company was still a new political power and hence could afford to remain immune to its officials. The same level of detachment was not possible by mid-nineteenth century giving rise to acculturative reform movements. Despite originating from different stimuli, both transitional and acculturative reform movements relied on scriptural interpretations to make their arguments. They gave more importance to Vedic Hinduism and imparting upper caste values among the lower castes. These similarities make it imperative for those interested in social reform movements emerging from the colonial milieu not to discount the ones that preceded the colonial era. Transitional reformers such as Sahajanand laid the ground work from which acculturative reformers and movements emerged.

Diwan Gaorishankar Oza of Bhavnagar, CSI

Figure 2.1 Adapted from S.M. Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar* (Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1909), p. 88.

Swami Sachchidanand Saraswati, the former Diwan Gaorishankar Oza

Figure 2.2 Adapted from S.M. Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar* (Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1909), p. 89.



Map of Bhavnagar State in Saurashtra (Kathiawad)

Map 2.1 Adapted from S.M. Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar* (Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1909).

Chapter 3

Princely Support for Education and Reform: An Extension of *Rajadharma*

Lord William Bentinck as Governor-General (1828-35) implemented the English East India Company's reform agenda set by Utilitarians (James Mill, John Stuart Mill) and Anglicists (Thomas Babington Macaulay).[1] British liberals sought to counter "ignorance" and "superstitions" by exposing Indians to "superior" Western values. These men had a hierarchical view of civilizations with English culture occupying the top position. A view best expressed by Macaulay in his 1835 Minute on Indian Education,

> *I have never found one among them [Orientalists] who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is indeed fully admitted by those members of the committee who support the oriental plan of education.*[2]

Macaulay identified western education as the means to bring Indians out of "darkness." His chief aim was to form a class of Indians "English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect."[3] These men would serve as interpreters between the British and rest of the Indian population. British liberals believed English-educated Indians would be loyal to

---

[1] Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, p. 28-43. To understand the Orientalist and Utilitarian influence on British administration in India see Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959) and Michael Dodson, *Orientalism, Empire, and National Culture: India, 1770-1880* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

[2] Macaulay, *Minute on Education*.

[3] Ibid.

the Company and could assist the imperial power by working as clerks and administrators. To this end the colonial government established universities at Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in 1857.[4] The initial batch of students enrolled at colonial colleges such as Elphinstone College came from families that had served as administrators under the Mughals or Marathas, communities with a history of literacy.

Bentinck's education policy was implemented in areas of direct British rule. Those regions of India which were under indirect rule, the numerous princely states, were not included in the Company's reformist agenda. In western India, the Company focused on development of trade and enacted policies that secured their commercial interests in the region.[5] Dealing with princely states in the first half of the nineteenth century was mainly a political and commercial concern. Utilitarians considered Indian kings as unenlightened despots incapable of good government. They did not consider Indian aristocrats an appropriate vanguard for a liberal revolution in India. Company's policy towards the princes changed after the Revolt of 1857.

The newly established British Raj had a vision for India where princes would play an important role; a vision in response to the loyalty shown by princes during the uprising. Since princes were to become junior partners in the imperial project, the British Raj expected them to be rulers of model states. As friends of the Empire, the princes needed to be in charge of efficient and modern administrations. In order to become model

[4] These universities were based on the University of London model and were degree granting institutions. Colleges affiliated with the universities were responsible for instruction. The university would administer examinations to students from these various colleges in order to determine whether they qualified for the appropriate degree. Eric Ashby, *Universities: British, Indian, African; A Study in the Ecology of Higher Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 47-72.

[5] Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India*, p. 225-32.

rulers they first needed to be appropriately Anglicized. Liberal education provided through British-style public schools would be the key to Anglicization. The princes in turn internalized British values and imperial hierarchy with some such as Bhagvatsinh of Gondal going on to impart a similar education to their subjects as we will see in the next chapter.

The "civilizing mission" ideology prevalent in areas of direct rule extended to princely states post-1857. This chapter examines how princely states in western India dealt with the pressure to reform, especially when it came to education. While some princes adapted the "civilizing mission" ideology to satisfy their imperial overlords, others such as Bhagvatsinh had internalized reformist beliefs and promoted education out of personal conviction. Bhavnagar, Junagadh, Gondal and Nawanagar, all princely states in Saurashtra, enacted reformist policies to earn good will from the state population, cultivate positive opinion with the emerging middle class in British India, and impress the imperial officials. In this they were working from a mindset similar to their larger and more widely known princely counterparts, such as Baroda, Mysore and Travancore. Scholarship on Baroda, Mysore and Travancore has showed us how their state administrations adopted certain social and economic policies to enhance the king's monarchical authority.[6] My work on princely states in western India will prove that by

[6] The princely states of Baroda, Mysore and Travancore were on a similar trajectory as the above mentioned princely states of Saurashtra. See Bhagavan, *Sovereign Spheres* for Baroda and Mysore; Robin Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance: Society and Politics in Travancore, 1847-1908* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1976) for Travancore; David Hardiman, "The Structure of a 'Progressive' State," in *People, Princes and Paramount Power: Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States*, ed. Robin Jeffrey (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 107-135 for Baroda; James Manor, *Political Change in an Indian State: Mysore 1917-1955* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1977) for Mysore.

adopting a reform agenda, princes reinvented themselves to adjust to a new socio-political climate that often viewed them as relics of the past.

Earlier scholarship has showed how the princes indigenized the modernization project to suit their own needs.[7] Barbara Ramusack has highlighted the important role of rulers and their family members as patrons of art, architecture, religion and culture.[8] Patronage by rulers and the royal family conformed to *rajadharma* (duties of a king).This chapter argues that princely support for education and reform also became a part of *rajadharma* in the late nineteenth century. As we will see in the case of Bhavnagar, the Rajput-ruled state started the first college in Saurashtra, Samaldas College, despite lack of support from the Bombay government. Bhavnagar state's decision was in response to local need for an institution of higher learning that would prepare men aspiring for careers in administration in princely or British India. A few years later the Muslim ruler of Junagadh, the premier princely state in Saurashtra, started the Bahauddin College for similar reasons. Inauguration of higher learning in princely India was an outcome of the new socio-political environment brought about by British rule which resulted in dramatic

[7] Pamela G. Price, *Kingship and Political Practice in Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). In her work on two *zamindars* in south India Price argues that Indian *zamindars* (little kings) successfully used indigenous as well as colonial institutions and ideologies to further their personal goals. Also see Manu Bhagavan, *Sovereign Spheres.* Through case studies of Baroda and Mysore states, Bhagavan argues Indian princes were in a unique position to refashion Western ideas and concepts for an Indian audience. They acted as translators and mediators between the Empire and colonized Indians.

[8] Ramusack, *Indian Princes and Their States*, p. 132-69. For patronage in ancient India, Mughal Era and Rajput courts see Barbara Stoler Miller ed., *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992). The volume also has a few articles on patronage under British rule.

changes in princely responsibilities. Successful adaptation to the new kingly culture by many princely states shows us that they were far from "hollow crowns."[9]

We will see how princes went from being heads of a military machine to trustees of their people overseeing development of roads, railways, schools and hospitals. While the military budget decreased, revenue from agriculture and trade increased in the second half of the nineteenth century due to expansion of cultivation and development of ports which led to collection of customs duties.[10] With increase in money in the treasury, states could now invest in improving roads, building railways and public works projects. State budgets by the end of nineteenth century apportioned significant amounts to public works and civic causes. Education was also a beneficiary in the post-1858 budgets. Saurashtra as a whole had nearly 400 English and vernacular schools by 1874. Though the ruler's job description changed, rivalries between princely states remained. Since competition on the battle ground was no longer possible, traditional rivalries between princely states transformed into a "scramble for development."[11]

British Policy Towards Princes in the Post-Revolt Era

Education and social reform had a symbiotic relationship during the nineteenth century. Proponents of formal education often came from a reformist background. Social reformers interested in improving the status of women in Indian society used education as

[9] Dirks, *Hollow Crown*. In his study of the kingdom of Pudukkottai in south India, Dirks argues that Indian princely states exercised no influence over their subjects nor did they have any bargaining power with the imperial government. He argues that princely states during the colonial era became "theater" states.

[10] Copland, *British Raj and the Indian Princes*, p. 139-40.

[11] Ibid, p. 140.

the means to achieve their goal.[12] When faced with a conservative backlash, British reformers changed their tactics and adapted. The winning strategy was to include Indians in reformist projects to counter charges of them being driven by outsiders. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the colonial government encouraged princes to lead reformist efforts as they were the "natural" leaders of India. This was a consequence of changes in imperial policy after the Revolt of 1857.

The 1857 rebellion was a protest against British intervention in Indian affairs, including land ownership laws, taxation, annexation of princely territories, religion and prevalence of Christian missionaries.[13] In response to the Revolt of 1857, the British Parliament abolished the English East India Company and established crown rule over the Company's territories. With establishment of the British Raj, two-thirds of what is now South Asia came under direct British rule, the remaining areas were princely territories and hence under indirect rule. Queen Victoria's 1858 Proclamation heralding a new era argued against further annexation of princely territories. The 1857 uprising had received its maximum support in northern India, especially in the newly conquered territory of Awadh. To prevent rebellions from disenfranchised populations Britain decided to refrain from annexing further Indian territories. The 1858 Proclamation pledged to "respect the rights, dignity and honour of the native princes as our own." The British Raj took this step to reward Indian princes for the loyalty shown towards the British during the Revolt.

---

[12] See chapter 2 above and 5 below.

[13] Thomas R. Metcalf, *The Aftermath of the Revolt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 60-72; Eric Stokes, *The Peasant Armed: The Indian Revolt of 1857* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 17, 50-51.

Princes across India, especially Punjabis (Sikhs and Jats), Rajputs (of Rajasthan and Gujarat), the Nizam of Hyderabad and certain Maratha rulers remained loyal to the Company. Governor-General Canning rewarded some of these princes with territorial grants. Bhopal, Hyderabad, Patiala, Rampur and Gwalior received control over districts adjacent to their states which had previously been disputed territories.[14] Bhavnagar regained control over districts of Gogha, Dhandhuka and Ranpur in 1866 after they had been under British rule for 12 years.[15] In 1862, Lord Canning also granted Jaswantsinh of Bhavnagar the *sanad* of adoption which guaranteed the continuance of the ruling family's hold over the throne in absence of biological heirs. The ability to adopt had become a coveted right among Indian princes as a result of Governor-General Dalhousie's (1848-56) refusal to recognize sons adopted by Indian princes as legitimate. Under the policy of doctrine of lapse, Dalhousie annexed various Indian kingdoms that did not have a male heir. Recognizing the deep Indian discontent with Dalhousie's actions, the British Raj discontinued the doctrine of lapse after 1858. In his capacity as the Viceroy, Canning sought to rebuild relationships with Indian princes and granting them the right to adopt was one way to win them over.

The loyalist behavior of many Indian princes during the 1857 uprising resulted in their entering the imperial imagination as junior partners in the imperial project. While assessing the Revolt, Lord Canning declared "these patches of Native government served as backwaters in the storm which would otherwise have swept over us in one great

[14] Ramusack, *Indian Princes and their States*, p. 105-06.
[15] Copland, *British Raj and the Indian Princes*, p. 116-17.

wave."[16] The Raj reasoned that if the princes had once helped the British they would continue to do so in the future. The British decided to use Indian princes as a bulwark against anti-imperial sentiments. These "natural leaders" of India would legitimize the British Raj and prevent its opponents from labeling Britain's Empire as a foreign usurpation, or so the British hoped. But if princes were to become friends of the Raj they had to exhibit model behavior as their actions would reflect on the British. Keeping this in mind the imperial power encouraged princes to become good stewards of their territories. With external policies including defense, communications and foreign relations under British control, Indian princes had jurisdiction over only internal matters. Princely states, whether antique, successor or warrior states, had to adjust to their status as subsidiaries to the British Raj.[17]

While the British stopped annexation of new territories after the Revolt, they continued to interfere in princely affairs. Those princes disloyal to the British were often removed from power on charges of incompetence or maladministration and replaced by a more pliant relative.[18] When the heir to a princely state was not of age the imperial power put together a minority administration. During 1876-77, in Saurashtra alone, twenty-eight

---

[16] Copland, *Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire*, p. 16

[17] Ramusack divides princely states into three categories: antique, successor and warrior/conquest states. Antique states originated around thirteenth century, for example the Rajput-ruled states. Successor states were former Mughal provinces such as Hyderabad. Warrior or conquest states as the name suggests were founded by warrior groups, for example Marathas, who established new political entities by offering military protection to local populations during the tumultuous years of Mughal decline. Ramusack, *Indian Princes and their States*, p. 13-40.

[18] Malhar Rao was deposed from Baroda's throne on charges of maladministration. In his place the British appointed Sayaji Rao III as the new Gaekwad. Hardiman, "The Structure of a 'Progressive' State," in *People, Princes and Paramount Power*, ed. Jeffrey, p. 113-14.

states were under minority administration.[19] The key states studied in this dissertation (Bhavnagar, Gondal, Junagadh, Nawanagar and Porbandar) were all under minority administration at some point during the second half of the nineteenth century. Depending on the situation, either a European or an Indian headed the minority government. There were also instances of joint administration where the European and Indian officials shared power.[20] Minority administrations were often a period of struggle for sovereignty on part of the minor ruler's family and advisers with the imperial government seeking to exercise maximum control in the princely state.[21] Despite the official policy of non-intervention, Britain continued to dictate princely matters whenever it served imperial interests.[22] Residents or political agents oversaw princely state administrations and reported to the Crown or the colonial government. Non-interference in princely affairs was a fluid policy that changed with successive administrations. While borders of princely states remained frozen in most cases from 1858 to 1947, the Crown and British Raj continued their involvement in internal princely matters.

Following the 1857 Revolt, the Bombay government tasked Major (later Colonel) Richard Keatinge, a political agent in the Kathiawar[23] Agency, with figuring out the level of the Kathiawar Agency's involvement in internal affairs of princely states under its

---

[19] Copland, *British Raj and the Indian Princes*, p. 138, 300, 316.

[20] A joint administration was put in place at Bhavnagar after Raja Jaswantsinh's death as his son Takhtsinh was a minor. Diwan Gaorishankar Oza and E.H. Percival acted as the Indian and European administrators respectively. Yagnik, *Gaorishankar Udayashankar*, p. 54-59. Gondal also went through joint administration after Raja Sagramji's death until Bhagvatsinh reached adulthood. St. Nihal Singh, *Shree Bhagvat Sinhjee: The Maker of Modern Gondal* (Gondal: Golden Jubilee Committee, 1934), p. 57-65.

[21] Mcleod, *Sovereignty, Power, Control*, p. 197-211.

[22] Ramusack, *Indian Princes and their States*, p. 107-11.

[23] The Kathiawar Agency oversaw the Saurashtra region of Gujarat, known as Kathiawar (or Kathiawad) in colonial times.

jurisdiction. States in Saurashtra varied greatly in size, population and resources. Keatinge concluded it would be inadvisable to implement a uniform policy among such diversity. He proposed a plan to divide Saurashtra's states into seven classes to differentiate the 350 plus principalities. Under the newly proposed system those states belonging to the First Class would have unrestricted judicial powers. Junagadh, Nawanagar, Bhavnagar, Porbandar and Dhrangadhra belonged to the First Class. States in the subsequent classes faced limitations on powers. Keatinge's class system adopted in May 1866, classified 188 states as jurisdictional states; these states had complete or limited jurisdictional powers depending on their class rank. Remaining princely states of Saurashtra numbering about 185 were non-jurisdictional states under the control of British political agents.[24]

The class system was part of a new honors system implemented by the imperial power in areas of indirect rule. All Indian princes were given a class rank determined by the size of the state, its revenue, the ruling family's lineage[25] and loyalty shown towards the British. Bernard Cohn has showed how the imperial honors system borrowed heavily from Mughal tradition, yet had a unique English flavor.[26] The British added their own titles such as the Order of the Star of India which was created in 1861 for rulers,

---

[24] Copland, *British Raj and the Indian Princes*, p. 108-11.

[25] States belonging to each class were further ranked. Junagadh shared its First Class position with four other states, but it occupied the topmost rank among its class division. Junagadh's premier position in Saurashtra was in deference to the state's role in the Mughal days. The Nawab of Junagadh was also the Governor of Saurashtra in pre-colonial times. The Nawab was also the only major Muslim ruler in western India.

[26] Bernard Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India," in *An Anthropologist Among the Historians and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 632-79. Cohn argues the British were not just adapting Mughal traditions but were also "inventing" them due to their failure in understanding Indian culture.

important Indians and British officials.[27] The Gaekwad of Baroda, Raja Ranmalsinh of Dhrangadhra, Raja Jaswantsinh of Bhavnagar and Diwan Gaorishankar Oza received the insignia of the Order of the Star of India in appreciation for their support during the uprising.[28] In 1878, the Order of the Indian Empire was established. There was also a special order for princely women, the Order of the Crown of India.[29]

Depending on the rank each princely state was entitled to a specific gun salute with the Viceroy as the Crown's representative having the highest number. The five Saurashtra princes belonging to the First Class were all awarded eleven gun salutes. At imperial gatherings princes would be seated according to their rank. Since princes were ranked in relation to their colleagues in the region, the rank was a matter of pride (or embarrassment) for its owner. A ruler's rank was not permanent. Through his actions he could move up the princely hierarchy (in rare cases even move down) or receive additional imperial honors and titles.[30] Thus began the culture of competition among princes for a higher rank which would translate into a higher gun salute, more judicial powers, greater proximity to imperial office holders at official events and honorary military ranks.[31] How could a prince improve his standing? After 1870 the most common

---

[27] The Order of the Star of India had twenty five members when it was first established in 1861. Ramusack, *Indian Princes and their States*, p. 92.

[28] Yagnik, *Gaorishankar Udayashankar*, p. 48-49. In rare cases the Order of the Star of India was also bestowed on princely state officials. In case of Bhavnagar it shows the importance of Gaorishankar Oza and the power he wielded in the state in his capacity as the Diwan.

[29] McLeod, *Sovereignty, Power, Control,* p. 249. Rani Nandkunvarba of Gondal was awarded the C.I. by the British Crown.

[30] Ibid, p. 261 and Copland, *British Raj and the Indian Princes*, p. 121 for examples of princes who were demoted as a result of maladministration or misbehavior.

[31] Mcleod, *Sovereignty, Power, Control*, p. 245-63.

method for a prince to improve his rank was through "good" governance. But what constituted "good" governance?

While addressing rulers of Rajputana at Jaipur in 1870, the Viceroy, Lord Mayo, laid out Britain's expectations,

> *If we respect your rights and privileges, you must also respect the rights and regard the privileges of those who are placed beneath your care. If we support you in your power, we expect in return good government. We demand that everywhere throughout the length and breadth of Rajpootana justice and order should prevail; that every man's property should be secure; that the traveller should come and go in safety; that the cultivator should enjoy the fruits of his labour and the trader the fruits of his commerce; that you should make roads…encourage education, and provide for the relief of the sick….*[32]

What the imperial government considered as good governance often differed from the traditional role of the ruler. *Rajadharma* required India kings to act as patrons for multiple causes including religious institutions, art, music, literature, architecture and sciences. Indian kings and queens through the colonial era continued to perform their traditional duties even as they promoted liberal policies. While the imperial government valued traditional acts of patronage, they did not want princes to make them their first priority. British political agents at princely courts encouraged rulers to modernize their administrative bureaucracy, to invest in building roads and railways, to make formal

[32] Copland, *British Raj and the Indian Princes,* p. 128-29. Lord Mayo was the Viceroy from 1869 to 1872.

education a pre-requisite for state employment and to promote modern medicine. Those rulers who lived up to the standards set by Lord Mayo were regarded as "progressive" rulers, a title that many princes aspired to achieve. It was in the prince's interest to be regarded as a "progressive" ruler since it would result in less intervention by the British Resident at court.

Many of the "progressive" changes were introduced in princely states in time of British-controlled minority administrations. This was the brain child of Lord Mayo who established the practice of activist British administration during the minority years of a ruler.[33] Political agents at princely courts would carry out changes deemed necessary and in imperial interests. They would centralize the bureaucracy, make changes in assessment and collection of revenue and probably start a school or hospital. To ensure that the reforms put in place during the minority years were not undone when the young prince came of age, the British decided to school future rulers in good governance. Towards this end a new educational culture aimed at princes came into force during the second half of the nineteenth century.

An Education Fit for Indian Princes

For Indian princes, the biggest change brought about by the 1857 uprising was the new educational policy directed towards them. As per Lord Mayo, "the hours of conquest are over; the age of improvement has begun."[34] He envisioned the princes playing a key

[33] K.M. Panikkar, *Indian States and the Government of India* (London, 1930), p. 56.
[34] Copland, *British Raj and the Indian Princes*, p. 140.

role in furthering the imperial progressive and reformist agenda. To prepare princes for their new role, political agents in Saurashtra and Bombay started pushing for a princely school in the 1860s. Noting that Saurashtra consisted of numerous states of all sizes that had long histories of hostilities with each other, Major (later Colonel) R. Keatinge and Sir Alexander Grant proposed a school that would bring the princes together.[35] A princely school would counter the "separative tendencies of isolation and aggrandizement" among the princes of Saurashtra by giving them a chance of fraternization from an early age.[36] Princely education was thus tied to the creation of a stable political climate. It was in the British Raj's interest to ensure that peace was maintained in its neighboring princely territories. English-style public schooling would "dispel the forces of darkness and ignorance," enabling the princes to discharge their duties as just and accomplished rulers.

To train princes to become junior partners in the imperial project, public schools modeled on Eton and Harrow were founded under the leadership of Lord Mayo. Rajkumar College at Rajkot was the first such public school established in India in 1870 for the princes of Saurashtra. Over the years it also attracted students from princely families in present day Maharashtra, Sind and a few from Rajputana (now Rajasthan). Two years later, Mayo College was established at Ajmer for the princes of Rajputana. Princely schools aimed to "make boys intelligent and to give them a capacity for affairs –

[35] Major Keatinge was then a political agent in Saurashtra. Sir Alexander Grant was the Director of Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency. *Forty Years of the Rajkumar College, Vol. 2*, p. 1-10; Ibid., p. 121.

[36] *Forty Years of the Rajkumar College, Vol. 1*, p. 326.

to give them the power to see and the will to do what is right."[37] Their intention was not to create "pandits", but to build character and enable Indian princes to better fulfill their traditional leadership roles. The British hoped that a Western education in addition to forming an alliance between the imperial power and Indian princes would turn the latter into enlightened rulers.

From its inception, Rajkumar College received support from some princes and state officials.[38] Raja Jaswantsinh of Bhavnagar along with his Diwan, Gaorishankar Oza, supported the British proposal to start a school for the princes of Saurashtra. Jaswantsinh contributed generously to the Rajkumar College fund.[39] Oza and Takhtsinh, the heir apparent of Bhavnagar, were present at the foundation stone laying ceremony for Rajkumar College at Rajkot in 1868.[40] Takhtsinh went on to become Rajkumar College's first pupil.[41] Later in life he along with his son Bhavsinh II donated to Rajkumar College for its expansion.[42] Princes supported Rajkumar and Mayo Colleges as they saw an English education as a means to enhance their standing in the British Empire. They embraced the ideological goals of a princely education in order to reinvent themselves in

---

[37] Dr. F.G. Selby, the acting Principal of Rajkumar College in 1883, quoted in the *Bombay Gazette*, January 20, 1883. In a resolution passed in 1898 the Political Department of Bombay Government re-emphasized the purpose of Rajkumar College as a training ground for the future rulers of India. Maharashtra State Archives, Education Department, 20/416, 1898.

[38] *Forty Years of the Rajkumar College, Vol. 1*, p. 65-71.

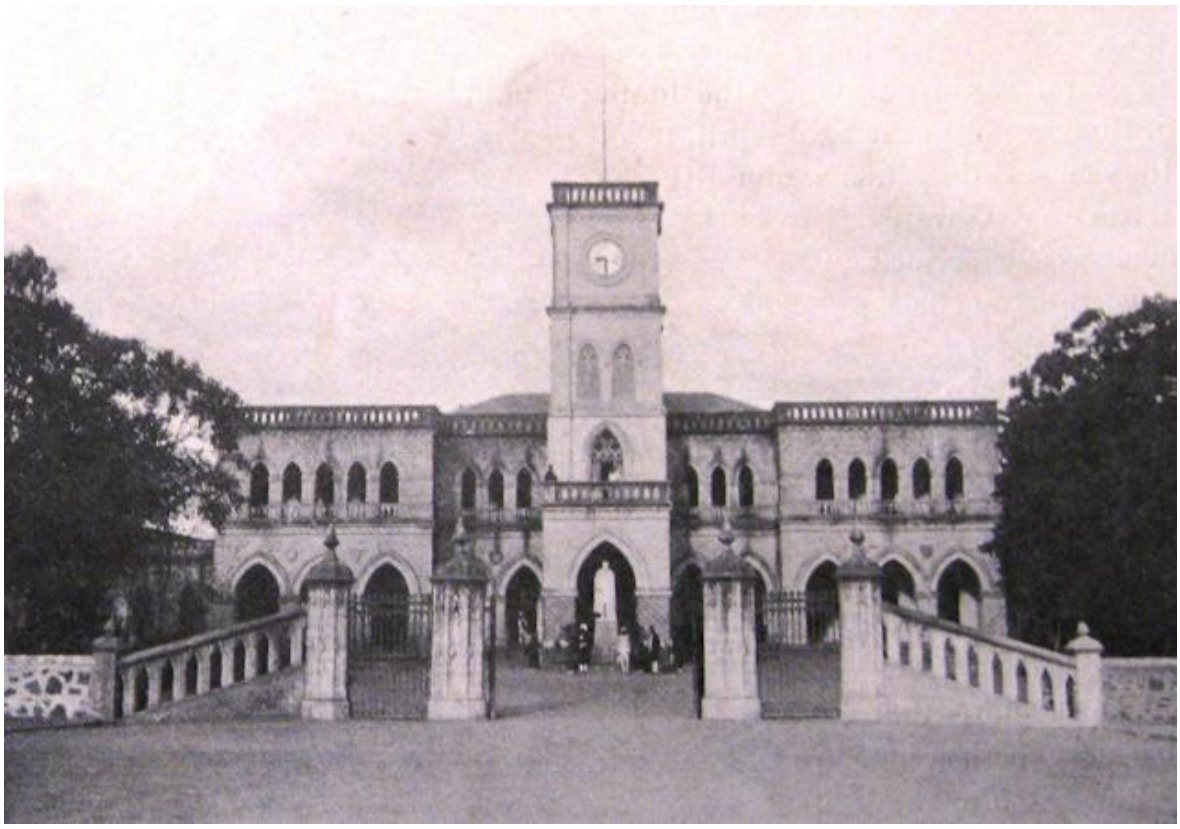
[39] Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar*, p. 50-51.

[40] Yagnik, *Gaorishankar Udayashankar*, p. 50-51.

[41] *Forty Years of the Rajkumar College, Vol. 2*, p. 30-31. Inspired by Bhavnagar, eleven more princely states sent their princes to the new school.

[42] Takhtsinh gave money to add a new wing to a dormitory to accommodate more students. Bhavsinh II gave money to build a grand hall to host ceremonies associated with school events or visits by dignitaries such as the Viceroy of India or the Governor of Bombay. The hall named after Bhavsinh II is still in use today at the Rajkumar College (see figure 3.1 below). Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar*, p. 60, 85; Ibid., p. 278.

the new socio-political environment.[43] As we will see Indian princes took to heart Lord Mayo's advice about becoming good stewards of their territories. I will examine in this and subsequent chapters how by enacting "progressive" policies princes were asserting monarchical authority. For many princes, promoting "progressive" policies became a part of their *rajadharma*.



Main Entrance of the Rajkumar College, Rajkot

Principal Chester Macnaghten's Statue, the RKC clock tower and entrance to Bhavsinhji Hall (built by Prince Bhavsinh II of Bhavnagar).
Figure 3.1 Adapted from S.M. Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar* (Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1909), p. 51.

[43] Satadru Sen, "The Politics of Deracination: Empire, Education and Elite Children in Colonial India," *Studies in History* 19:1 (2003), p. 19.

When the princely colleges first started there were some princely families that treated the enterprise with suspicion or disinterest. British Residents had to use their persuasive skills to get these princely families to send their young boys to a boarding school. The most commonly cited obstacle in the path of an English education for the princes was the *zenana* influence.[44] European men depicted the female world of the *zenana* as a place of intrigue, deceit and sexual misconduct. British political agents were disturbed at the notion of the young heirs spending formative years of their life exclusively under female supervision, especially if the father had passed away. They did not believe a model ruler could emerge from a place of "moral ambiguity." The only solution was to remove the princes from that poisonous environment and place them under the tutelage of European men in a boarding school environment. Since the stereotyped feminine *zenana* bred lazy, deceitful and weak characters, a masculine boarding school under the direction of European men was required to counter the negative effect.[45] Political agents and educators were of the opinion that the only way to train young princes to become effective rulers was to remove them from the sycophantic atmosphere of the palace and place them in an institution that fostered discipline.

Mothers of course were hesitant to part from their young sons. Besides the emotional bond they had a practical reason for their stance. These women derived their status from their position as the mother of the future king. In such a situation, mothers understandably did not want another entity having a major influence on their sons. But

---

[44] Ramusack, *Indian Princes and their States*, p. 108-11.

[45] Satadru Sen, *Migrant Races: Empire, Identity and K.S. Ranjitsinhji* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 26; Sen, "The Politics of Deracination," p. 19-28.

the Residents ultimately prevailed in most scenarios convincing the reluctant parties to send their sons to Rajkumar College. One such mother was Rani Monghiba of Gondal who having lost her husband was not keen on sending her young son, Bhagvatsinh, to Rajkumar College. The British Resident, Captain A.M. Phillips, ultimately prevailed over Monghiba, and Bhagvatsinh started his education at Rajkumar College at the age of eight and become one of its most exceptional pupils.[46]

Several years after, the imperial government arranged a trip to England for Bhagvatsinh when he was seventeen, against his mother's wishes. In 1883, Bhagvatsinh sailed for England in the company of Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel) G.E. Hancock of the Kathiawad political department. From 1880s it became a custom for princes to finish their schooling with an extended trip to England. The purpose of such trips was to expose the future rulers to "superior" English culture and to remind them of their position in the imperial hierarchy.[47] Young princes were always accompanied by British guardians, never their parents, in an attempt to exercise effective supervision.[48] In 1888, Ranjitsinh[49] of Nawanagar, the future cricket sensation, Ramsinh of Bhavnagar and Mansur Khachar of Jasdan left for Cambridge under the guardianship of Chester Macnaghten, Principal of Rajkumar College. In 1912, when the Government of Bombay decided to send Mohabat

[46] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 26-27.

[47] Sen, "The Politics of Deracination," p. 23.

[48] Shompa Lahiri, *Indians in Britain: Anglo-Indian Encounters, Race and Identity 1880-1930* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p. 131-33; Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 56-57.

[49] Ranjitsinh or Ranji is most famous for being the first "black" man to play cricket for England.

Khan of Junagadh to England against his mother's wishes, he was accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Tudor Owen.[50]

Besides gender there was a racial component to "proper" upbringing of young princes. Not only did they need separation from the feminine environment of the *zenana*, but they also had to be removed from the sycophantic culture of the Indian court. Additionally, Indian tutors and companions were not deemed appropriate for an effective education.[51] The Principal of Rajkumar College was always British. Indians could not hold that position. Takhtsinh of Bhavnagar who lost his father while he was a minor toured India in 1875 under the guardianship of Colonel H.L. Nutt.[52] There were Indian princes who saw merit in British men overseeing the upbringing of boys from the aristocratic class.[53] Nasrullah Khan of Sachin was one such Anglophile prince who was a head boy of Rajkumar College in 1880s and a Cambridge graduate.[54] Khan fervently believed that Indian tutors were incapable of instilling discipline in a young heir-apparent as they had the tendency to fawn over the future ruler. Only a neutral teacher such as a public school educated Englishman could train young princes to become men of "character."[55]

---

[50] National Archives of India, Foreign and Political Department, 321/P (1936); Sen, "The Politics of Deracination," p. 23.

[51] *Forty Years of the Rajkumar College, Vol. 1,* p. 118-31. Princes usually brought a retinue of servants with them who would see to their needs while at school. As per Rajkumar College rules the job of servants was limited to domestic duties. They were discouraged from carrying out "conversations" with princes as servants were not suitable companions.

[52] Yagnik, *Gaorishankar Udayashankar,* p. 64-65.

[53] Nasrullah Khan, *The Ruling Chiefs of Western India and the Rajkumar College* (Bombay: Thacker, 1898), p. 1-10.

[54] Administration Report of Kathiawar, 1883-84 and 1884-85.

[55] *Forty Years of the Rajkumar College, Vol. 3*, p. 245; Khan, *Ruling Chiefs of Western India*, p. 1-10.

Members of the educated Indian middle class shared Khan's opinion as is evident from editorials in newspapers.[56] The *Gujarat Monthly Journal* published in Bombay criticized the Rana of Porbandar for refusing to send his heir to the Rajkumar College.[57] *Rast Goftar* publicly advised the princes to learn the English language.[58] Bombay based newspapers expected princes to establish "good" government. At a welcome reception for the Gaekwad of Baroda in Bombay, *Bombay Samachar* stated the people of Baroda expect "reform and progress" from Sayaji Rao.[59] By the 1880s, it was not just the British who expected Indian princes to be reformist and progressive, the English-educated Indian middle class had joined the chorus. How did the British and English-educated Indians define "good, reformist, progressive" government?

Assertion of Sovereignty and Monarchical Authority

The Indian media as well as British officials referred to certain princely states as "progressive." These progressive princely states included Baroda, Mysore and Travancore. "Progress" in this case meant the presence of a modern administrative bureaucracy, introduction of representative institutions, promotion of public education

[56] *Kathiawar Times*, March 22, 1899. *Kathiawar Times* was an Anglo-Gujarati bi-weekly published in Rajkot. The editors periodically commented on affairs of Rajkumar College.

[57] MSA, *Report on Native Newspapers*, Bombay Presidency (1885).

[58] MSA, *RNP,* Bombay Presidency (1885). *Rast Goftar* was a Gujarati weekly published in Bombay. The newspaper was started by Dadabhai Naoroji in 1851. It was a pioneer in the field of social reform.

[59] MSA, *RNP*, Bombay Presidency (1885). *Bombay Samachar* was the first Gujarati newspaper started in Bombay in 1822. From 1832 it became a daily paper. It was the leading Gujarati newspaper in the city with the business community being its chief audience.

and western medicine.[60] The state supported formal education as it provided much needed employees for an expanding administrative bureaucracy. The princely states of Bhavnagar, Junagadh, Gondal and Nawanagar could be added to the table listing progressive states.[61] Similar to their more widely known counterparts, these princely states of Saurashtra enacted social and economic reforms to earn good will from the state population, cultivate positive opinion with the middle class in British India, and impress the imperial officials. "Progressive" policies asserted princely control and authority in an era when the duties and powers of rulers were changing. Bhavnagar and Junagadh states' educational policies were directed towards the traditionally literate castes in their states and the British overlords. They were an attempt by the princes to enhance monarchical authority and state their sovereignty.

Bhavnagar started the first college in Saurashtra, Samaldas College, in 1885. In August 1884, Samaldas Parmanandas Mehta, Bhavnagar's beloved Diwan passed away. The Rajkumar College-educated ruler Raja Takhtsinh wanted to commemorate Mehta's long and loyal service to the state. On consultation with the Mehta family, Takhtsinh decided to build a college in Bhavnagar city named after his former Diwan. At first the Bombay government opposed the establishment of a college in a princely state, but acceded in the end due to Takhtsinh's persistence. In order to understand Takhtsinh's determination to build a college in his capital city we need to examine the relationship between the ruler and the traditionally literate castes that produced key state officials. In

---

[60] Ramusack, *Indian Princes and their States*, p. 174.

[61] Charles Allen and Sharda Dwivedi, *Lives of the Indian Princes* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1984), p. 90, 239.

Saurashtra during the colonial era, *diwans* along with rulers shaped the adaptation to indirect British rule and subsequent modernization.

Diwans of Saurashtra came from the historically literate upper castes. A majority of them belonged to the Vadnagara Brahman caste whose members lived across Gujarat. Vadnagara or Nagar Brahmans held important positions in Gujarat during the Mughal era due to their knowledge of Persian. Rulers often gave Nagars the right to collect revenue from certain villages in return for their service. In Junagadh, the Muslim ruler exempted Nagars along with *sipahis* (soldiers) and Sayyids from paying taxes.[62] With arrival of the English East India Company Nagars switched to learning English and effectively transitioned from working for the Mughals to the British. Diwans of Bhavnagar – Parmanandas Mehta, Gaorishankar Oza, Samaldas Mehta and Sir Prabhashankar Pattani – all belonged to the Nagar Brahman caste.

Besides Nagars, the Vania caste also produced many *diwans*, foremost of all the men of the Gandhi family. Mohandas Gandhi's father Karamchand was the *diwan* of Rajkot state and his grandfather the *diwan* of Porbandar. These upper castes often rivaled each other at courts competing for patronage. While Nagars and Vanias (to a lesser extent) had served as *diwans* in pre-colonial times, the changing political scenario under the British gave rise to a new class of *diwans* from the Parsi (Zoroastrian) community.[63] Bezanji Merwanji Damri, Gondal's *diwan* under Raja Bhagvatsinh and Merwanji Pestonji, Nawanagar's *diwan* under Raja Ranjitsinh were both Parsis. In addition to the

[62] Amarji, *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, p. 26-27, 33.
[63] Copland, *British Raj and the Indian Princes*, p. 65.

two traditional castes, rulers opted for Parsi *diwans* with the growing need for officials familiar with the British administrative system. It was this new requirement for state officials in the upper echelons to be familiar with British forms of governance that led to the traditionally literate castes turning to English education and supporting the establishment of western style educational institutions such as the Samaldas College. Promoting modern education became a part of *rajadharma* in the second half of the nineteenth century as the king needed a professional bureaucracy and the dominant communities in his state asked for such an education.

Before we get into the events that led to the successful establishment of the Samaldas College it is important to understand how Bhavnagar state's history is intricately linked with the Nagar Brahman community and the multiple generations of the Mehta and Oza families.[64] Bhavnagar state was one of the premier states of nineteenth-century Saurashtra. It was surrounded by British controlled territories in the north and west. To the east lies the Gulf of Cambay and the Arabian sea to its south. Raja Bhavsinh I, a Gohil Rajput, ascended to the throne of Bhavnagar in 1703 at a time when Mughal control over western India was declining. With a reduction in Ahmedabad's (Mughal capital of Gujarat) influence, ambitious men in Saurashtra had an opportunity to increase their territorial holdings. Bhavsinh did just that by building on what he had inherited from his father and successfully defending his territories from Maratha attacks. Bhavsinh

[64] Allen and Dwivedi, *Lives of the Indian Princes*, p. 236.

consolidated the state in 1723 and founded the city of Bhavnagar which would remain the state's capital until 1947.[65]

Bhavsinh's descendent Raja Jaswantsinh (r. 1854-70) laid the foundations for a modern Bhavnagar state by constructing roads, establishing post offices, developing the port in the capital city, starting formal schools and supporting modern medicine by encouraging the use of vaccinations. Under Jaswantsinh's reign we see that traditional understanding of *rajadharma* extended to also include modern education and modern medicine. Instead of abandoning his traditional duties, Jaswantsinh added new ones. Bhavnagar was not alone in revising the concept of *rajadharma*, states such as Travancore, Baroda and Mysore were also adopting similar policies. These new state-led endeavors were visible signs of good government, especially the building of roads and railways, and the imperial power treated them as indicators of progress.[66] Jaswantsinh along with his able *diwan*, Gaorishankar Oza, was responsible for Bhavnagar state's adaptation to the modern era.

Gaorishankar Oza (1805-91) belonged to the Nagar Brahman community of Gogha, a town near Bhavnagar. Nagar Brahmans of Gogha headed Bhavnagar state's administration through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Though originally from Gogha, Nagar Brahmans slowly moved to Bhavnagar city after 1772 under Raja Wakhatsinh who offered them positions in the state administration.[67] Parmanandas Mehta and his brother-in-law Gaorishankar Oza were two such individuals who made the move

---

[65] Forbes, *Ras Mala*, p. 418; Amarji, *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, p. 95-98. Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar*, p. 9, 31-32.

[66] Jeffrey, *Decline of Nayar Dominance*, p. 90-96.

[67] Watson, *Statistical Account of Bhavnagar*, p. 11-12.

to Bhavnagar to work for the ruler. Mehta had grown up in Gogha where he received a traditional education including training in Persian.[68] He married Rajuba Oza, Gaorishankar's sister, who gave birth to a son, Samaldas (also a future *diwan*), in 1812. A few years later Mehta assumed the position of *diwan* of Bhavnagar state in 1817. In 1821, Oza became an assistant to Shevakram Desai, Bhavnagar state's representative to the English East India Company's Kathiawad Political Agency.[69] A year later Oza joined the state's revenue department where he worked for many years. On Mehta's retirement in 1847, Oza became the Diwan of Bhavnagar state.

Gaorishankar Oza was the *diwan* from 1847 to 1879. During his tenure he saw the British establish themselves as the new economic, political and cultural power in India. In a pragmatic manner Oza maintained friendly relationships with the emerging power while protecting Bhavnagar's interests.[70] In mid-nineteenth century, the Bombay government was aggressively pushing for the extension of railways in Saurashtra. Provincial governments in other parts of India were behaving in a manner similar to Bombay and encouraging princes in their jurisdiction to construct railways lines. A railway line connected Bangalore (Mysore) to Madras in 1870. Hyderabad state developed railways during the 1870s and 1880s.[71] The Bombay government wanted Bhavnagar to build a line connecting its capital with the British controlled seaport of Gogha.[72] Oza disagreed with Bombay's intentions as connecting Bhavnagar to Gogha

[68] Harilal Savailal, *Samaldas Parmanandas* (Bombay: Tatva-Vivechaka Press, 1912), p. 1-10.
[69] Yagnik, *Gaorishankar Udayashankar*, p. 7.
[70] Copland, *British Raj and the Indian Princes*, p. 29-30.
[71] Ramusack, *Indian Princes and their States*, p. 191-196.
[72] Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar*, p. 58-59.

port would have an adverse effect on the state's trade.[73] The railway line would hurt Bhavnagar's economy and the state would lose money on the venture. Oza wanted to connect Bhavnagar to Wadhwan, a city at the border of British and princely Gujarat. He believed such a connection would increase the state's revenue, help boost trade and make travel easier for the people of Bhavnagar. After six years of opposition from the Bombay government Oza prevailed in 1877 once Sir Richard Temple became the Governor. The new Governor agreed to the proposed railway line provided Bhavnagar assumed complete construction costs. The Bhavnagar-Wadhwan line started functioning in 1880 and was a great diplomatic victory for Oza.[74]

In addition to constructing roads, railways and developing the Bhavnagar port, Oza also oversaw the beginnings of a formal education system in Bhavnagar state to provide men aspiring to enter state service with systemic training. In 1852 the first modern vernacular school opened in Bhavnagar city. By 1860 there were vernacular schools for boys across the state. The first vernacular school for girls opened in Bhavnagar city in 1857 amidst great fanfare and public support from the ruler, the Nagar Brahman community and leading *mahajans* (merchant guilds) of the city.[75] With the increasing need to learn English, an Anglo-Vernacular school for boys started in 1856 and a similar school for girls in 1889. Bhavnagar state's education policy earned praise

---

[73] In her work on Hyderabad, Tara Sethia has pointed out that the British only encouraged modernizing projects within princely states when they advanced imperial interests. We see a similar situation in Bhavnagar where the Bombay government wanted to connect Bhavnagar to a British-controlled seaport. Tara Sethia, "Berar and the Nizam's State Railway: Politics of British Interests in Hyderabad State, 1853-1883" *Indo-British Review* 15:2 (1988): 59-78.

[74] Yagnik, *Gaorishankar Udayashankar*, p. 69-79.

[75] For a detailed analysis of the first girls' school in Bhavnagar see chapter 2 above.

from Sir Theodore Hope, Educational Inspector of the Northern Division of the Bombay Presidency and J.B. Peile, political agent in Kathiawad.[76] In 1872, Bhavnagar got its first high school, Alfred High School, headed by a Parsi principal, Jamsetji Naoroji Unwala.[77] The state also established an endowment to provide scholarships to students seeking higher education outside the state.[78]

Bhavnagar High School

Figure 3.2 Adapted from S.M. Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar* (Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1909), p. 47.

[76] Yagnik, *Gaorishankar Udayashankar,* p. 47-48.
[77] Ibid., p. 61.
[78] Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar*, p. 51, 108.

Establishment of a western-style education system was a necessity as the new climate required state administrators to have a formal education, a fact that Oza understood. Traditional education for boys consisted of arithmetic, reading, writing, Braj Bhasa, Persian and Sanskrit. Reading material often included Vedanta literature, Bhagavad Gita, *Gulistan*, *Sikandar-namah*, *Shah-namah* and works of Abul-Fazl.[79] With establishment of formal schools and in order to adjust to the administrative demands put forward by the British Raj, in addition to the traditional subjects, boys also learned English, Gujarati, mathematics, natural science, geography and history.[80] These initiatives taken by Diwan Oza and Raja Jaswantsinh were continued by Raja Takhtsinh and Diwan Samaldas Mehta. The above examples prove that during Jaswantsinh's reign, the traditional idea of *rajadharma* expanded to include kingly patronage and state sponsorship of modern educational institutions.

On Oza's retirement in 1879 his nephew, Samaldas Mehta, became the *diwan* of Bhavnagar. Samaldas Mehta first entered state service in 1846, a year before his father retired from his position as the *diwan*. Mehta began his career as the *diwan* alongside Raja Takhtsinh (1858-96) who assumed full powers in 1878. Bhavnagar's premier position in Saurashtra solidified under Takhtsinh and Mehta. From 1870, *karbharis* (state officers) or *diwans* of various First and Second Class princely states of Saurashtra met once every year to discuss matters affecting the region.[81] The *karbharis* meeting was an

---

[79] Savailal, *Samaldas Parmanandas*, p. 72-73. As a boy living with his father in Bhavnagar, Samaldas read stories from the *Shah-namah* to the aged king Wajesinh who found them entertaining.

[80] P.G. Korat, S.V. Jani, J.D. Bhal ed., *Bhavnagar Rajyano Itihas* (Ahmedabad: Pashrav Prakashan, 1995), p. 265.

[81] *Manual of Karbharis' Meeting of Kathiawar States,* p. 13

outcome of the "civilizing mission" approach taken by the imperial government. Since Saurashtra consisted of numerous states of all sizes that had long histories of hostilities with each other, Major Keatinge, the political agent, devised ways to increase cooperation among the larger states. A friendly attitude among the states was essential if the British plan to connect Saurashtra to British Gujarat by rail was to become a reality. It was the princely states who would put forward the resources to build the railway system and since the network would connect various states, its construction and maintenance would depend on cooperation among the parties involved. An annual meeting of *karbharis* was essential in such an environment as it would give the state representatives an opportunity to present and solve any problems.[82] At their annual meetings *karbharis* allotted funds for regional interests such as repairing roads, vaccination programs, the Rajkumar College, Alfred High School at Rajkot, Barton Female Training College, Hunter Male Training College and educational inspections carried out by the Kathiawar Agency.[83] As *diwan* of a premier state, Samaldas Mehta assumed the leadership role at annual *karbhari* meetings and guided this collective in its early stages.

While Mehta was using his office to enhance Bhavnagar's position in Saurashtra's princely hierarchy, Takhtsinh's government was sponsoring various modernizing projects as a way to make Bhavnagar a model state. One of Takhtsinh's first acts as the ruler was to donate money to his alma mater, the Rajkumar College, for

[82] Ibid., p. 89-91.
[83] Adm Report of Kathiawar, 1896-97. Barton and Hunter colleges trained teachers.

building the Sir Takhtsinh wing, an extension to a dormitory.[84] Takhtsinh's support for the Rajkumar College was essential to the princely school's survival as Bhavnagar was one of the most important states of Saurashtra. His son and heir Bhavsinh II studied at Rajkumar College and continued the family tradition of patronizing the princely school.[85] To celebrate the fortieth anniversary of Rajkumar College Bhavsinh commissioned a multi-volume history of the institution.

Following in Jaswantsinh's footsteps, Takhtsinh supported girls' education. His two daughters studied at the Majiraj Girls' School named after Takhtsinh's wife.[86] In 1881, the Kathiawar Agency started a school at Wadhwan for sons of *grasias* (petty landlords) who could not afford to send their children to Rajkumar College but were too proud to have them educated at a regular school. Takhtsinh supported the Wadhwan Grasia College from its inception and helped provide accommodation for boarders. He also endowed scholarships for students who needed financial assistance.[87]

In 1878, Takhtsinh decided to build the Sir Takhtsinhji Hospital which would be an architectural marvel and showcase Bhavnagar's modernity by practicing western medicine.[88] He expanded his father's library and housed it in a new building along with a museum naming it the Barton Library and Museum of Antiquities.[89] Rajput rulers in the

---

[84] Savailal, *Samaldas Parmanandas*, p. 201.

[85] *Forty Years of the Rajkumar College, Vol. 1*, p. 58.

[86] Adm Report of Kathiawar, 1883-84 and 1886-87. The queen of Bhavnagar Majirajba came from Gondal. Her brother Bhagvatsinh, the ruler of Gondal, was another reformist prince. I will talk about his education policy in chapter 4.

[87] Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar,* p. 71-72; *Forty Years of the Rajkumar College, Vol.1*, p. 279.

[88] Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar*, p. 60.

[89] Ibid., p. 64.

late nineteenth century preferred the Indo-Saracenic style of architecture for public buildings.[90] The majestic buildings that housed the state hospital, library, museum and high school (see figure 3.2 below) were physical representations of the state's power. This was keeping in tradition with earlier practices of Rajput and Muslim rulers who patronized architecture as per *rajadharma*.[91] With state support for a modern hospital, library, museum and high school, Takhtsinh was fulfilling the duties of a Rajput Hindu ruler and a modern king by emphasizing the state's mastery over science and history. Like his father, Takhtsinh continued to follow traditional kingly duties, while adapting the concept of *rajadharma* for a modern environment.

Takhtsinh's actions were directed at his own people and the British political agents. In this he was continuing the precedent set by Gaorishankar Oza who accepted the Company and later the British Raj as the paramount power in Saurashtra, but was not willing to toe the imperial line if it was not in Bhavnagar's interests. Oza asserted Bhavnagar's priorities in the Bhavnagar-Wadhwan railway case by refusing to use state revenues to finance an unprofitable rail connection despite pressure from the Bombay government. Oza and later Takhtsinh encouraged formal education as the state saw merit in employing men who had received a systemic education. It was in the state's interests to have employees who had a schooling that prepared them for administrative and diplomatic work as per nineteenth-century standards. Samaldas College was born out of such a mindset with Takhtsinh taking a step that was in the interest of the state and

---

[90] Thomas R. Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 105-40.

[91] Ramusack, *Indian Princes and their States*, p. 147-48.

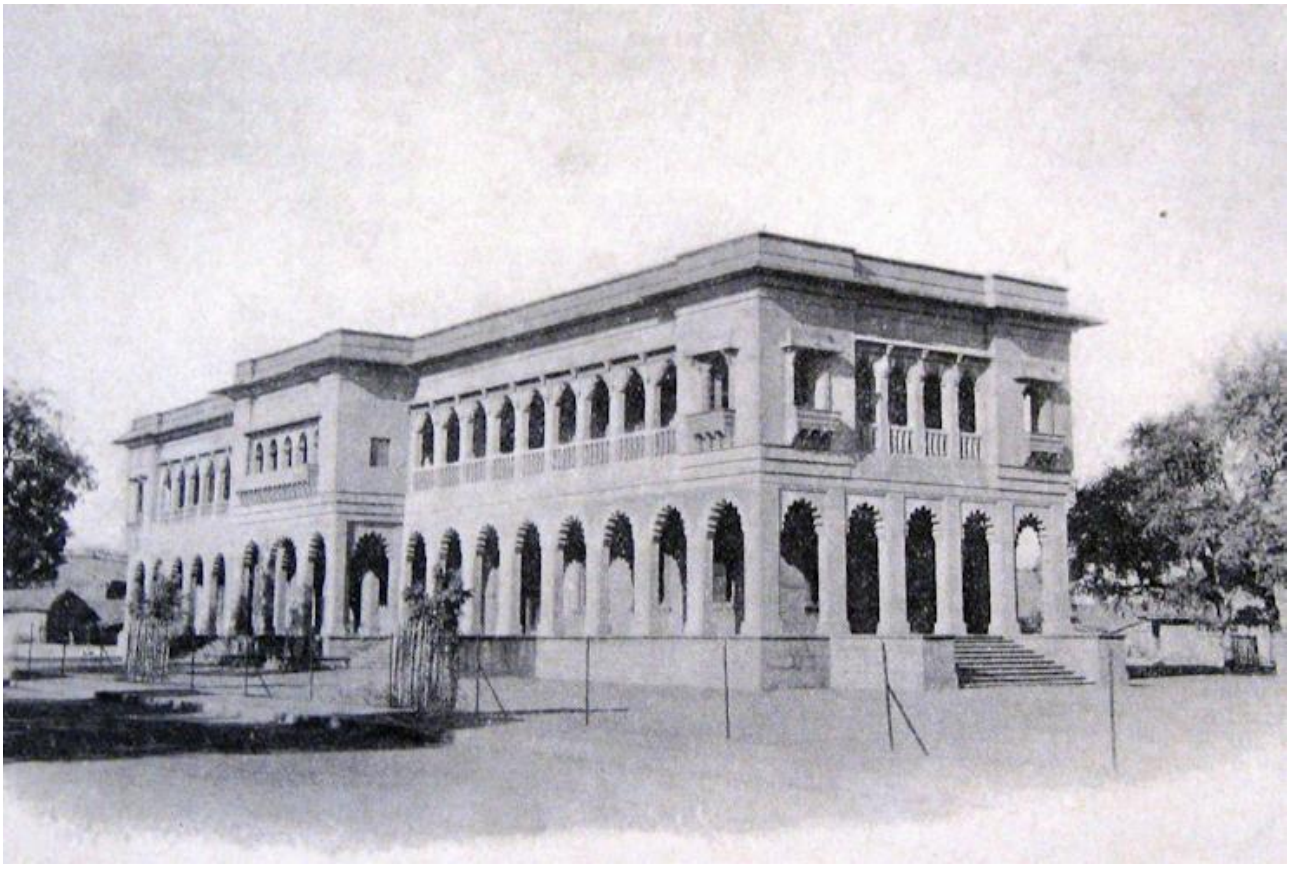
received full support from literate castes. By opening Samaldas College, the first such institution of higher learning in Saurashtra, Takhtsinh was also solidifying his position as the progressive ruler of a premier state.

In aspiring to be a ruler of a model state which had hospitals, vaccination programs, roads, railways, ports and schools, Takhtsinh won praise from the imperial power that set the criteria for what counted as progressive. He received the coveted imperial honor, a Knight Commander of the Star of India (KCSI) in 1881. In 1886, a year after Samaldas College started accepting students Takhtsinh became the even more prestigious Knight Grand Commander of the Star of India (GCSI).[92] While Takhtsinh was proud of his KCSI and GCSI titles, his policies were not enacted with just the British in mind. Just as Oza had his eye on the state treasury and city merchants when he fought for the Bhavnagar-Wadhwan rail, by building a state college Takhtsinh was aiming to please the literate upper castes. It was important for Takhtsinh to assert his relevance at a time when princes were becoming marginalized and often the target of criticism by the Indian press in British India.[93] Princes were turning their territories into "model states" and carrying out "progressive" policies to assert monarchical authority and enhance the ruling family's popularity among powerful sections of the state population.

Pragmatic calculations on part of the ruler and the state administration were accompanied by a changing idea of what it meant to be a king in nineteenth-century India. *Rajadharma* evolved in the second half of the nineteenth century into a concept

[92] Adm Report of Kathiawar, 1886-87.
[93] MSA, *RNP*, Bombay Presidency, various years.

that included traditional as well as modern ideas. In addition to following traditional kingly duties and acting as patrons for art and architecture, Indian princes such as Jaswantsinh and Takhtsinh adopted new kingly duties by building modern educational institutions for boys and girls, railways and hospitals.



Samaldas College, Bhavnagar

Figure 3.3 Adapted from S.M. Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar* (Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1909), p. 66.

Race to the Top: Bhavnagar State and Samaldas College

The opening of the Samaldas College in 1885 was a continuation of state policies set in motion by Diwan Gaorishankar Oza, Raja Jaswantsinh and Diwan Samaldas Mehta. After Mehta's death in 1884, Raja Takhtsinh was looking for a way to honor his former *diwan*. The Mehta family who had connections with other reformist families of Saurashtra and Ahmedabad suggested starting a college.[94] At this point there were only two colleges in Gujarat, Baroda College and Gujarat College at Ahmedabad. Students from Saurashtra had to travel to these two cities or Bombay to get an education. The distance and cultural change often prevented many from getting a college education.[95] With princely states expecting their administrators to be formally educated, there was a clear need for a college in Saurashtra. Bhavnagar state tapped into this need and decided to establish a college.

The Samaldas College started running in 1885 with its students sitting for the B.A. and LL.B. exams offered by Bombay University. Subjects taught included English, Gujarati, Persian, Sanskrit, Mathematics and History.[96] The above subjects indicate the College prepared students to become administrators in either princely states or British India; there is an emphasis on language skills and history, both needed for working in a modern bureaucracy. The fact that scientific subjects were not introduced until 1937 lays further credence to Samaldas College being an institution training future administrators.

---

[94] Samaldas Mehta was good friends with Manishankar Kikani, a leading reformer in Saurashtra. Samaldas Mehta's son (Lallubhai) was married to the granddaughter of Bholanath Sarabhai of Ahmedabad, a very important social reformer and entrepreneur. Savailal, *Samaldas Parmanandas,* p. 142-44.

[95] Korat ed., *Bhavnagar Rajyano Itihas*, p. 267; Parul A. Satashiya, *Itihas Madhu* (Gujarat Sahitya Academy, 2006), p. 61-63.

[96] Satashiya, *Itihas Madhu*, p. 63.

Alumni included illustrious men such as Mohandas Gandhi and the famous Gujarati poet and folklorist Jhaverchand Meghani.

This College which could count Gandhi as a student only came about because its founders persevered against initial opposition from the Bombay government. The ruler of Bhavnagar along with his officials were keen on building a college in their capital city which would serve as a much needed venue for professional training for young men of the region. The new college would not just decrease the cost associated with higher education, but would also encourage more men to seek a B.A. or LL.B. if they could do so at an institution close to home. The Bombay government's education department did not share Bhavnagar's enthusiasm.[97] The education department believed that a princely state would not be capable of maintaining a credible institution of higher learning. Officials in British India regarded princely states as "backward" areas.

Additionally, while Bhavnagar was planning on building a new college, the Gujarat College in Ahmedabad was in financial disarray. Since Ahmedabad was under direct British rule, its college was under the Bombay government's education department that placed greater emphasis on reinvigorating an existing institution over building a new one, especially since the institution in question was under its control. The Bombay government thus tried to deflect Takhtsinh's reformist efforts by encouraging him to donate to the Gujarat College in Ahmedabad.[98] James Braithwaite Peile, a political agent leading such efforts even suggested to Takhtsinh that the Bombay government would be

[97] MSA, Education Department, 11/9 (1885).
[98] MSA, Edu Dept, 11/9 (1885).

willing to rename the Ahmedabad College, Gujarat Samaldas College. Takhtsinh was adamant that an institution commemorating Mehta's service to Bhavnagar state would have to be located in Bhavnagar. Though Takhtsinh refused appeals from every branch of the Bombay government to reconsider, he knew he was putting himself in a potentially risky position. Takhtsinh would need the Bombay government's approval if the college was to be successful, as its degrees would have to be recognized by the University of Bombay. If Samaldas College's students could not sit for the university's exams they would not earn the much needed degree required to be successful in princely or British India. To put Peile in a more accommodating mindset, Takhtsinh decided to make a generous donation to Gujarat College and show his support for an educational institution in a colonial city.[99] Bhavnagar's donation was matched by Junagadh, another First Class state in Saurashtra. Following in Bhavnagar's footsteps, Kutch, Nawanagar, Gondal, Dhrangadhra, Morvi, Rajkot and Porbandar (all princely states in Gujarat) also contributed substantial amounts.[100] Princely states successfully bailed out Gujarat College from its financial troubles.

Once the Gujarat College received much needed financial support, the British were in no position to discourage princes from promoting education in their own territories. Since 1858, it had been imperial policy to actively encourage "civilizing missions" in princely India, in a similar vein to those encouraged by Bentinck and Dalhousie in British India. In good conscience the Bombay government could only

[99] MSA, Edu Dept, 11/48 (1885).
[100] MSA, Edu Dept, 11/48 (1885).

discourage Takhtsinh to a limit. It is evident that Peile reached this limit pretty quickly as in November of 1885, a year after Bhavnagar first proposed the college, Sir James Fergusson, Governor of Bombay, laid the foundation stone for the new building of Samaldas College. [101] The University of Bombay also agreed to let Samaldas College's students sit for their exams. The Bombay government's change of heart was quite spectacular. During a visit to Bhavnagar in 1886, Lord Reay, the new Governor of Bombay, invested Takhtsinh with the insignia of the Order of the Knight Grand Commander of the Star of India. The imperial title of GCSI was in recognition of Takhtsinh's "good" governance.[102] Even though the Bombay government at first did not support Takhtsinh's venture, they then recognized his reformist actions and rewarded him in imperial fashion.

Why did Takhtsinh go to such great lengths to establish Samaldas College? Takhtsinh was catering to the demands of his people, especially the literate upper castes who wanted to receive an education in Bhavnagar city.[103] The impetus for Samaldas College did not come from Bombay. In fact Bombay's education department was uncomfortable with the independence shown by Takhtsinh. They would have preferred if he had consulted the political agent before making such an important decision.[104] The colonial government was not a motivating factor; Takhtsinh was acting out of indigenous concerns. Takhtsinh was continuing the educational policy set in place by Gaorishankar

[101] Adm Report of Kathiawar, 1884-85.

[102] Adm Report of Kathiawar, 1886-87.

[103] Adm Reports of Bhavnagar State, various years. Yearly administration reports make it clear that traditionally literate castes such as Brahmans were interested in formal education. Students at Samaldas College were mainly Brahmans or members of upper castes.

[104] MSA, Edu Dept, 11/9 (1885).

Oza during his minority years. Bhavnagar state's educational policy since the 1850s had advocated increasing the number of educational institutions. Oza and Jaswantsinh took the first step by starting vernacular and Anglo-vernacular schools for boys and girls across the state. During Takhtsinh's minority, Oza built Bhavnagar's first high school. Now that Takhtsinh had assumed full powers it was a logical step to build a college.

Public opinion also favored the linkage of government employment with academic qualifications. *Gujarat Mitra*, an Anglo-Gujarati weekly published in Surat, drew attention to officials in many of Saurashtra's states appointing unqualified friends and relatives to judicial posts.[105] Since these men did not have the legal training or education to carry out their tasks, the overall administration suffered. Princes were aware of such scrutiny, and the image-conscious among them took steps to remedy the situation. Bhavnagar state expected men holding important posts to have academic credentials. Similar sentiments were shared by the princely state of Travancore in south India. Madhav Rao, the Diwan of Travancore, spent considerable money on Western-style education during the 1860s and 1870s.[106] Madhav Rao believed those entering state service should have formal schooling as an educated bureaucracy would be more efficient. With this thought in mind, in 1873, Travancore completed building the Maharaja's College whose graduates could go on to serve the state. [107] In addition to benefiting the state, an educated administrative sector would please British officials as well as the Indian middle class represented by the print media.

---

[105] MSA, *RNP,* Bombay Presidency (1886).
[106] Jeffrey, *Decline of Nayar Dominance*, p. 75-82.
[107] Ibid., p. 102.

Bhavnagar's progressive actions were taken primarily out of self-interest. Gaorishankar Oza and Takhtsinh's policies resulted in Bhavnagar becoming one of the richest states among those of its size. Earning imperial honors and recognition from the British were an added bonus. By comparison, the Wadiyar family of Mysore cultivated a progressive image to gain legitimacy from the imperial government and strengthen their control in the state.[108] They were isolated from the local elites who considered the royal family ritually inferior. Unlike other princely families who were bound by caste and kinship to powerful groups in the state who bestowed legitimacy on the ruler, the Wadiyars of Mysore had no such support from the Lingayats and Vokkaligas. Mysore in the twentieth century focused on industries, education, public buildings and city planning to become a progressive state. As a result, the Government of India never interfered in the internal affairs of Mysore. This was another benefit of being a "model state" as all princely states shunned external interference. Bhavnagar was free from activist British Residents at court since Gaorishankar Oza and Takhtsinh had independent personalities and did not budge under British interference. When the Bombay government attempted to dictate policy in Bhavnagar as in the case of the Bhavnagar-Wadhwan railway line or the Samaldas College, they usually failed as the ruler and the *diwan* had support from the people. Bhavnagar pursued progressive policies not just to impress the British, but because they were popular among the state's population.

Besides the imperial government and their own population, Indian princes also had to contend with Indians in British territories. This included the politically conscious

[108] Manor, *Political Change in an Indian State*, p. 11-15.

and educated Indians in key cities such as Bombay, Ahmedabad, Calcutta and Madras. In the twentieth century nationalist opinion grew among the urban educated upper and middle class. Indian nationalists praised Mysore because its "model" administration proved that Indians could govern themselves and furthered the nationalist cause.[109] By the late nineteenth and definitely in the twentieth century, Indians expected princes to present themselves as progressive rulers. When Western-educated princes failed to run a liberal administration, they received criticism from Indians. Ranjitsinh, the famous cricketer and a Jadeja Rajput, became the ruler of Nawanagar in 1907. He was a graduate of Rajkumar College and Cambridge University. He was also the first non-white to earn a position on England's cricket team. His path-breaking achievements turned him into a celebrity long before he became a king.

When Ranjitsinh became the ruler of Nawanagar, Indians had high expectations from the Westernized celebrity prince. Within two years those expectations were shattered. In 1909, the *Gujarati* criticized Ranjitsinh for wasting public money to entertain his cricket friends from England, for hosting lavish parties for his European guests, and indulging in his love of hunting and expensive cars.[110] Indians had expected Ranjitsinh to model Nawanagar in the image of its neighbors, Bhavnagar, Gondal and Baroda – to behave as an enlightened prince and not a celebrity. Responding to criticism Ranjitsinh instructed his *diwan* Merwanji Pestonji to spend money on public works

[109] Ibid., p. 11-15.
[110] Sen, *Migrant Races*, p. 62-63. *Gujarati* was a weekly published in Bombay.

projects.[111] The state built schools, roads, railway lines, hospitals and developed ports. Ranjitsinh embraced the role of a reformer to enhance his monarchical authority.

The audience for Nawanagar's reforms included Indian politicians and journalists who kept a watchful eye on Ranjitsinh and missed no chance for expressing disapproval. The Indian States' Peoples' Conference published a sensationalist pamphlet criticizing Ranjitsinh for his hunting parties, lavish lifestyle, absence of a free press and lack of representative institutions.[112] The Nawanagar state responded immediately by putting out a publication that highlighted "improvements" in Nawanagar after Ranjitsinh became the ruler.[113] Though Ranjitsinh received more scrutiny because of his celebrity status, journalists from Bombay and Saurashtra kept a watchful eye on all princes in the region.[114] Rulers and *diwans* supported social and economic reforms due to a desire to keep pace with the changing interpretations of *rajadharma* and to stave off charges of maladministration from Indian journalists, politicians, the imperial government and their own people.

There was also an element of competition present when it came to princely reforms. In response to criticisms from Indian nationalists and journalists, Diwan Merwanji Pestonji formulated a plan which outlined various projects for the improvement of Nawanagar. Besides economic and developmental projects, the *diwan* suggested the

---

[111] Ibid., p. 100-103.

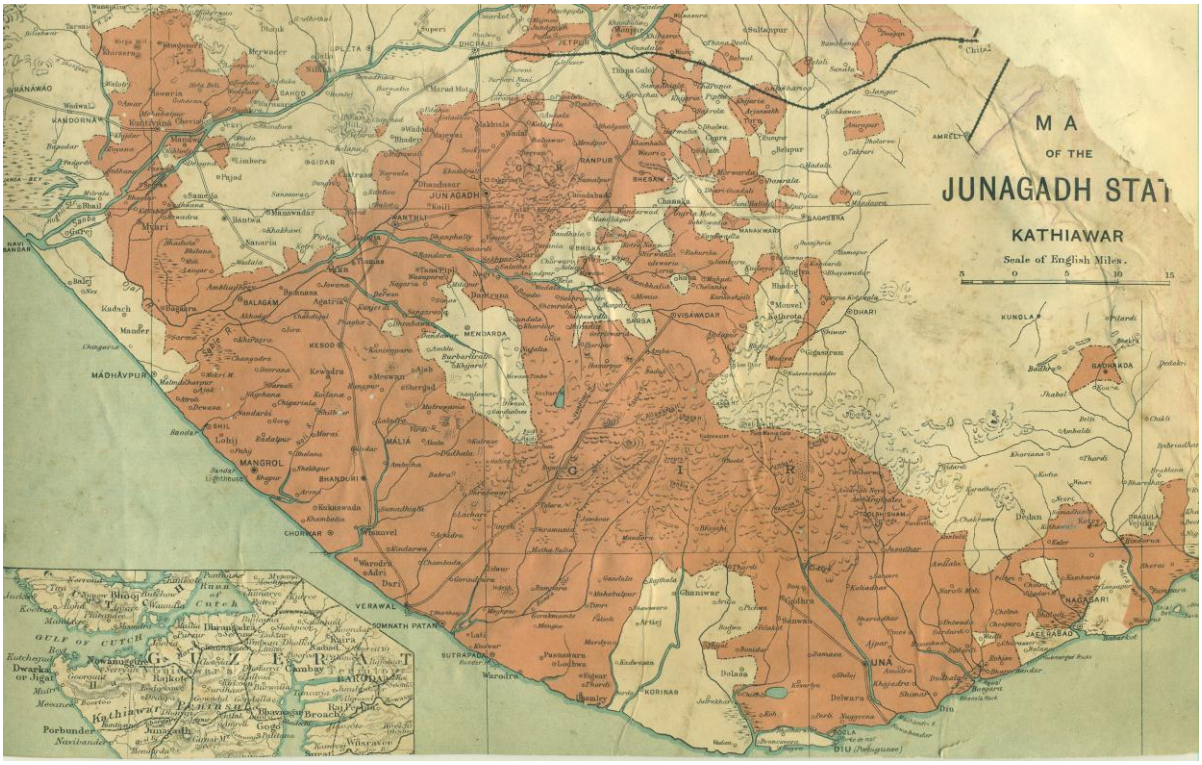
[112] GSA-R, *India Princes as Their People See Them. An Inside View of the Administration of the State of Nawanagar of "Prince Ranji."* The Indian States' Peoples' Conference consisted of the urban elite (Brahmans and merchants), who inspired by their counterparts in British India, demanded a greater say in princely state governments.

[113] *Nawanagar and its Critics* (Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1929).

[114] MSA, *RNP,* Bombay Presidency, various years.

state budget approve the building of a select few institutions that were "necessary" in a modern state.[115] Merwanji Pestonji wanted to build a technical institute, a female hospital, an asylum for the blind and handicapped and a museum of local exhibits. Bhavnagar and Junagadh states had all of these hallmarks of a modern state. Both Bhavnagar and Nawanagar were First Class states and shared the same number of gun salutes, yet Nawanagar ranked just above Bhavnagar in the princely hierarchy. If Ranjitsinh wanted to become the ruler of a modern state he would have to at least live up to the standards set by a state that Nawanagar outranked. And the fact that they were neighbors made comparisons even more important. Another state keeping a watch over Bhavnagar's "progress" was the premier state in Saurashtra, Junagadh, to which we now turn.

[115] Sen, *Migrant Races*, p. 104.



Map of Junagadh State in Saurashtra (Kathiawad)

Map 3.1 Adapted from S.M. Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Junagadh* (Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1907).

Figure 3.4 Bahauddin College, Junagadh

Photographs by Rashmikant Bhalodia

Junagadh Joins the Race: Establishment of Bahauddin College

In the imperial hierarchy Junagadh with its Muslim ruler occupied the topmost position among princely states of Saurashtra. Bhavnagar, Gondal and Nawanagar were First Class states with equal gun salutes, but Junagadh outranked all of them. Junagadh's premier position was in recognition of its former political importance as the center of Mughal power in Saurashtra. The state merited a visit from any imperial official touring princely states in western India. Multiple Governors of Bombay made trips to Junagadh from 1867 onwards in order to inaugurate a railway line, hospital, library or museum built by the state.[116] The nearby Gir forest, home to plenty of game including the only surviving Asiatic lions, must have made the long journey from Bombay worthwhile. The first Viceroy to visit Junagadh was Lord Curzon who came to inaugurate the Bahauddin College in 1900. After Curzon other Viceroys such as Lord Irwin and Lord Willingdon also included Junagadh in their itineraries.[117]

Establishing the Bahauddin College was crucial for a state such as Junagadh. Not only was it the premier state in Saurashtra, it was also one of the more important Muslim princely states in India. It was in the Nawab's interest to present himself as a reformer in all fields, especially education. Once Bhavnagar, a state ranked lower than Junagadh, started the Samaldas College, Junagadh had to "keep up" in the race for progress. There was also a great demand among the state's population for such an institution as those seeking a higher education had to travel to Bhavnagar, Ahmedabad or Bombay. Under

---

[116] S.M. Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Junagadh* (Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1907), p. 104-11.

[117] NAI, F & P, 10/P (1936).

pressure from the imperial government the state sought to modernize its bureaucracy and hoped the college would prepare men for such a task. In establishing the Bahauddin College, Junagadh was listening to the literate sections of its community, especially Brahmans.[118] It was also enhancing its own image as a modern state and earning praise from the imperial power by taking steps to modernize its bureaucracy. Junagadh, like its princely counterparts across India, had multiple audiences for its reformist policies.

The ruling family of the princely state of Junagadh was Babi Pathan. Sherkhan Bahadurkhan Babi became the first Nawab of Junagadh in 1748 when he declared independence from Mughal Ahmedabad.[119] Over a century later, Sherkhan's descendent Nawab Mahabatkhan II (r. 1851-82) pledged his loyalty to the British Raj by attending the 1877 Imperial Durbar held at Delhi. The Viceroy, Lord Lytton, orchestrated the royal gathering to recognize Indian princes as the "natural leaders" of India and allies of the British.[120] As expected from Britain's "junior partner," the Nawab embraced "progressive" policies and built schools for boys and girls, including a high school in Junagadh and Rajkot (the Alfred High School). [121] Recognizing Mahabatkhan's reformist policies the Queen bestowed upon him the insignia of the Knight Commander of the Star of India (KCSI) in 1871.

The Rajkumar College-educated Bahadurkhan III (1856-92) succeeded his father in 1881. As part of his training, Bahadurkhan had toured India accompanied by Colonel

[118] Diwans of Junagadh traditionally came from the Nagar Brahman community or Muslim families close to the ruler. Nagars were predominantly employed in the state administration.

[119] *Forty Years of the Rajkumar College, Vol.1*, p. 264.

[120] To see how the Imperial Assemblage of 1877 blended Mughal with Victorian traditions see Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India."

[121] *Forty Years of the Rajkumar College, Vol. 1*, p. 265-68.

Lester. Princely education did not have the intended effect on Bahadurkhan. Political agents in Saurashtra often complained about his lack of interest in administrative work.[122] Vazir Bahauddin ran the state in his ruler's name. He oversaw the opening of the first branch of the Junagadh state railway in 1887, connecting the port of Verawal to Jetalsar.[123] Junagadh, similar to Bhavnagar, was interested in using the railway to maximize trade and increase revenue for the state while pleasing the British. Bahauddin continued the state's policy of promoting modern education by setting up a fund to send selected men to England for studying law and medicine.[124] Despite his lack of involvement in governance, Bahadurkhan received a higher honor than his father from the imperial government, the GCSI (Knight Grand Commander of the Star of India), presumably to recognize the state's achievements under the capable Vazir.[125] On Bahadurkhan's death his brother Rasulkhan became the ruler in 1892. Rasulkhan, like his brother, was uninterested in governance. The Vazir once again came to the rescue.

Nawab Mahabatkhan II had created the position of Vazir for Bahauddin who went on to serve under Bahadurkhan III and Rasulkhan. He was the first and last Vazir of Junagadh with the position eliminated after his retirement. Sheikh Mahmad Bahauddin Hasam was born in 1835. His sister Ladlibibi was married to Mahabatkhan II giving Bahauddin a connection to the ruling family. With basic education in Gujarati and Urdu, Bahauddin entered state service at the age of twenty one. From 1856-65 he was involved

[122] Adm Report of Kathiawar, 1883-84.
[123] MSA, Edu Dept, 143, Vol. 2 (1890).
[124] Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Junagadh*, p. 99-101.
[125] *Forty Years of the Rajkumar College, Vol. 1*, p. 266-67.

in various expeditions against the Makrani *baharvatiya* (outlaws) who attacked Junagadh from their hiding places in the Gir forests.[126] Upon defeating the outlaws after a ten year struggle, Bahauddin established the Nawab's monarchical authority in areas where it was once weak. After enhancing Junagadh's sovereignty through the traditional domain of warfare, the Vazir turned to Victorian developmental policies.

In 1884, Vazir Bahauddin financed the Mahabat Madrasa for Muslim boys in Junagadh.[127] In starting the *madrasa* (school for Islamic learning) Bahauddin recognized the important place of Junagadh in Saurashtra. As a Muslim ruled state surrounded by Rajput *rajas*, it was Junagadh's duty to ensure the welfare of the region's Muslim community. [128] Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam of Bhopal, ruler of a Muslim princely state, supported education with a similar mindset.[129] Bahauddin started the Mahabatkhanji fellowship at Bombay University for Muslim students in 1887.[130] The fellowship aimed to encourage higher education among Muslims. For the first few years the fellow was attached to the Gujarat College in Ahmedabad, but the fellowship transferred to Bahauddin College once it started functioning.[131]

Bahauddin's carrying out philanthropic activities in his own name was not unusual for princely states of Saurashtra, which had a tradition of powerful *diwans* often

---

[126] Pradyuman Khachar, *Sorathni Vidyapith Bahauddin College* (Junagadh, 2002), p. 19-20.

[127] NAI, F & P, Internal Proceedings 129-131 (February 1886).

[128] *Adm Report of Junagadh State, 1934-35*.

[129] Lambert-Hurley, *Muslim Women, Reform and Princely Patronage*.

[130] GSA-J, Bahauddin College Daftar, Letter from Nawab Bahadur Khan to Colonel Charles Wodehouse, Political Agent, Kathiawar, February 3, 1887.

[131] GSA-J, Bahauddin College Daftar, Letter from Chunilal Sarabhai, Diwan of Junagadh, to Registrar, Bombay University, March 4, 1902. There were occasions when no Muslim candidate was interested in the fellowship. The position for that year transferred to Hindu students with preference given to those from Saurashtra followed by Gujarat and then Deccan.

working independently of the ruler. Gaorishankar Oza also financed a *vedshala* (school to teach Vedas) from his own money.[132] As mentioned earlier in the chapter, *diwans* enjoyed a position of great prominence in princely states. Even the imperial government recognized the situation and awarded *diwans* with imperial honors such as the Companion of the Order of the Star of India (CSI) for Oza and Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire (CIE) for Bahauddin. Imperial honors ritualistically cemented ties between the British Raj and their allies. Diwans such as Oza and Bahauddin were important enough to merit such a distinction.

To honor Bahauddin's thirty-five years of service to the state, his admirers started a fund in his name. Instead of accepting the collected money, Bahauddin made a further contribution and requested the fund be used in service of the state.[133] Literate castes such as Brahmans had long waited for a college.[134] There was increasing pressure from the British Raj on all princely states to make formal education a pre-requisite for people employed in state administration. In case of Junagadh the British also wanted the state to employ more Muslim men. In 1894, the Political Secretary in Bombay, William Lee-Warner showed concern over the dominance of Brahmans in colonial as well as princely state service.[135] By this time the British view of Brahmans as loyal imperial supporters had soured. In the imperial imagination the Anglicized Brahmans had become troublemakers with their involvement in agitational activities such as supporting the

[132] *Gujarat Shalapatra*, Vol. 24, No. 4, April 1885.
[133] Adm Report of Kathiawar, 1896-97.
[134] Kalpa Manek, *Itivrutt: Aitihasik Lekhak Sangrah* (Gujarat Sahitya Academy, 2003), p. 35.
[135] Copland, *British Raj and the Indian Princes*, p. 64-65.

Indian National Congress. British officials wanted to reduce the number of Brahmans in government service by recruiting lower caste Hindus and Muslims. The problem with the new plan was that only upper caste Hindus and Parsis had the language skills that the British desired. With this realization the imperial government started encouraging Western education among Muslims. In case of Junagadh the state was hesitant to hire men from outside the state.[136] In order to satisfy the British demand to hire more Muslims and the Nawab's preference for hiring his subjects, state leaders decided to build a college which could fulfill both criteria.

In 1897, Colonel J.M. Hunter, Political Agent in Kathiawad, laid the foundation stone for the College building. Bahauddin gave a speech at the accompanying ceremony where he identified the rationale behind this College. Since Junagadh is the premier state in Saurashtra it should also work towards becoming the premier state in education. Bahauddin College was a step in that direction. The College would also produce capable individuals who can work for the betterment of the state.[137] The College was affiliated with the University of Bombay and prepared students for the B.A., B.Sc., M.A. and LL.B. examinations.[138] Courses taught included English, Mathematics, Science, Sanskrit, Persian, French, History and Political Science. To encourage education among Muslims the College did not charge tuition or boarding costs.[139] Additionally, Muslim students were also given a spending allowance. Hindu students in need of financial assistance

[136] Manek, *Itivrutt,* p. 32.
[137] Khachar, *Sorathni Vidyapith*, p. 30.
[138] Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Junagadh*, p. 35.
[139] Adm Report of Junagadh, 1910-11.

received scholarships from the state.[140] Despite various incentives provided to Muslims the College consisted overwhelmingly of Brahman, Hindu Vania and Jain students.[141] Most of Junagadh's Muslims belonged to trading castes or formerly militarized ethnic groups who did not give much importance to higher education.

Junagadh's education policy was in response to demands from the dominant communities within the state, such as Brahmans and upper caste Hindus, and pressure from the imperial government. Like its princely counterparts across India, the Nawab and his administration had multiple audiences. Junagadh, similar to Bhavnagar, promoted modern education as a pragmatic policy. In need of an educated administrative class the state supported schools and colleges. Having a college in the capital city served dual purposes. First, it gave Junagadh a place in the elite group of "progressive" states that had a college. Second, with the Bahauddin College Junagadh no longer needed to hire qualified individuals from foreign territories. For the Nawab the Bahauddin College was an extension of his monarchical authority as it allowed him to employ his own subjects in the administrative bureaucracy.

Conclusion

The British custom of giving Indian princes specific ranks propagated traditional rivalries. Instead of the spirit of competition being displayed on the battlefield, princes

[140] Adm Report of Junagadh, 1929-30.

[141] GSA-J, Bahauddin College Daftar, Student lists for July 1921, November 1921 and June 1924; Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Junagadh*, p. 34-35; Adm Reports of Junagadh State, 1910-11, 1924-25.

from mid-nineteenth century became participants in a "scramble for development." Though the imperial honors system started out of the British desire to classify Indian princes, over time Indian rulers used this system to their own advantage in an attempt to assert their sovereignty and outrank their neighbors. Princely courts channeled their traditional rivalries into a race for modernization. The competitive spirit is evident in the annual administration reports prepared by the First and Second Class states. These yearly reports list state spending on development and social projects such as roads, railways, schools and hospitals. Administration reports were a way for states to show their fellow princes, the Kathiawar Agency, and the Bombay government advances made towards modernization. Some even included pie charts and graphs to better illustrate the state "progress" under the stewardship of a particular ruler. Gondal state authorized official histories of the state and the royal dynasty, the ruler's biography, and consolidated accounts of laws passed by the state on "progressive" topics such as education. In the twentieth century the Times of India Press published histories of princely states including Bhavnagar and Junagadh. These books proudly displayed prominent buildings of the state, all with grand architecture, as achievements of the ruler who constructed them.[142]

The main audiences for princes were other Indians – the princely state population, neighboring princes, and Indian politicians and journalists. Bhavnagar state's liberal policies regarding education, modern medicine and transportation were enacted since they had the potential to benefit the state. In carrying out these progressive and reformist

[142] The Times of India Press in Bombay published *Ruling Princes of India: Junagadh* and *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar* in 1907 and 1909 respectively.

policies princes were responding to the needs of their people. The primary purpose of the formal education system started by Diwan Gaorishankar Oza was to train boys who would become future administrators of the state. Takhtsinh started the Samaldas College since there was a great demand from the literate upper castes for such an institution. Oza and Takhtsinh had influential sections of Bhavnagari society as their audience. To please them, both the *diwan* and the ruler were willing to confront the imperial power. Despite initial British opposition, Takhtsinh went ahead with his plans for Samaldas College as the state needed such an institution of higher learning. With the Samaldas College, Bhavnagar became the first princely state in Saurashtra to have facilities for post-high school education.

The element of competition was ever present in princely India from mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. The imperial system with its gun salutes, military honors and ranking kept alive traditional rivalries between Indians rulers which were now channeled into developmental policies. The competitive spirit played a role in Junagadh state, the premier state in Saurashtra, opening the Bahauddin college a decade after Bhavnagar started the Samaldas College. Junagadh also started its college because it was in the state's interest. The College would provide the state with a much needed cadre of educated employees. By employing Junagadh's subjects the Nawab could preserve his sense of sovereignty. In his capacity as the Vazir, Bahauddin worked to push Junagadh forward on the path of "progress." As a Muslim he promoted education among his co-religionists who were relatively less educated than their Hindu counterparts.

Indian princes whole-heartedly adopted liberal definition of what constituted "good" governance. This was an effect of the early training princes received at the hands of their tutors at Rajkumar and Mayo Colleges. Princely education changed Indian understanding of *rajadharma* with Indian king and queens promoting liberal policies in order to build a model modern state. Ruling as per British standards of good governance meant less interference from British political agents. Princes were very sensitive of any imperial action that threatened their sovereignty and receiving continuous orders from the imperial government would count in that unwanted category. Princes became reformers and modernizers to enhance their monarchical authority and preemptively prevent any affront to their sovereignty.

In becoming reformers, princes were also adapting to the new environment with its changing expectations from the state. Princely administrations adapting successfully to the needs of their peoples shows us that they retained their vitality during the colonial era. They were not "hollow crowns" governed exclusively by British India. Princes and Diwans were important historical actors taking initiatives and setting policies in the interest of their state. *Rajadharma* evolved and made room for liberal policies. "Model states" such as Bhavnagar, Mysore and Baroda were a blend of the traditional and the modern. Indian princes continued to patronize religious institutions and leaders, art, architecture, classical dance and music, while also supporting educational institutions, hospitals, libraries, museums and modernizing their bureaucracy.

His Highness Nawab Sir Rasulkhan, KCSI
Ruler of Junagadh State

Figure 3.5 Adapted from *The King and Queen in India* (Bombay: Bennett, Coleman & Co., 1912).

His Highness Maharaja Sir Takhtsinh, GCSI
Ruler of Bhavnagar State

Figure 3.6 Adapted from S.M. Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar* (Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1909).

His Highness Maharaja Sir Bhavsinh II, KCSI
Ruler of Bhavnagar State

Figure 3.7 Adapted from S.M. Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar* (Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1909).

Chapter 4

Prince Bhagvatsinh of Gondal: A Liberal Reformer

Raja Bhagvatsinh (1865-1944), a Jadeja Rajput, was the ruler of Gondal state in western India from 1884-1944. His contemporaries referred to Bhagvatsinh as the "maker of modern Gondal," a title he was proud to own. During his long reign over Gondal, Bhagvatsinh made great advances in the fields of education, irrigation and transportation. He was a champion of women's education, sending his daughters to boarding schools in England and encouraging them to become role models for the girls of Gondal. Bhagvatsinh's political outlook was shaped by his teachers at Rajkumar College, examples set by other reformist princes, and his widowed mother, Monghiba. Similar to his counterparts in the more well-known states of Baroda, Mysore and Travancore, Bhagvatsinh promoted progressive policies as a result of an internal need in Gondal to modernize and pressure from the imperial government.

This chapter examines Bhagvatsinh's upbringing, his interest in furthering education, and his faith in the uplifting power of liberal education.[1] We will see how Bhagvatsinh used his princely education to build a school for the *grasias* (feudal aristocracy) of Saurashtra. I will examine the similarities in British view of Indian princes in the 1860s-70s and Bhagvatsinh's plan for the *grasias* in 1890s. Bhagvatsinh's internalization of Victorian values is evident in his education policy towards the *grasias*.

[1] In the next chapter I examine Monghiba's influences on Bhagvatsinh and the role played by the women of Gondal in encouraging education for girls.

Though Bhagvatsinh's faith in liberal education was a result of his Rajkumar College education, he sought to blend Victorian ideas of kingly duty with an Indian understanding of *rajadharma* (duties of a king). Bhagvatsinh saw promotion of social reforms and modern education as an extension of *rajadharma*. Similar to his counterparts in Bhavnagar, Junagadh and Nawanagar, Bhagvatsinh continued his traditional duties as a ruler while adding new ones in response to the changing world. We will see how Bhagvatsinh became a reformer and modernizer to enhance his monarchical authority and prevent any British incursions on his sovereignty in the name of maladministration.[2] Bhagvatsinh's ability to adapt to the changing socio-political environment ushered in by colonization, modernization and eventually nationalism shows the vitality of Indian kingship during the colonial era. Many Indian princes successfully made the transition from being heads of a military machine to trustees of their state.

Gondal, a land-locked state in Saurashtra, bordered Rajkot, Nawanagar and Junagadh. Bhagvatsinh of Gondal belonged to a Chandravamshi Jadeja Rajput family. In addition to Gondal, both Rajkot and Nawanagar were ruled by Jadeja Rajputs. A junior branch from Nawanagar had established the princely state of Rajkot. A few generations later in the eighteenth century, taking advantage of the turmoil in Gujarat due to the declining Mughal power, Bhagvatsinh's ancestors separated from Rajkot and went in

[2] In 1875, Bombay government forced Malharrao, the Gaekwad of Baroda, to abdicate his throne as the state was mismanaged under his rule. For more on Baroda see Bhagavan, *Sovereign Spheres* and Hardiman, "The Structure of a 'Progressive' State," in *People, Princes and Paramount Power*, ed. Jeffrey, p. 107-35. British practice of intervening in the internal affairs of princely states on grounds of maladministration continued in the twentieth century. Mcleod, *Sovereignty, Power, Control*, p. 212-29.

search of their own territory.[3] In mid-eighteenth century, the Rajput Kumbhoji II built Gondal state by forming timely alliances with the Muslim Nawab of Junagadh and the Maratha Gaekwad of Baroda. In return for providing Junagadh military and financial assistance in its time of need, the Nawab transferred Dhoraji and Upleta districts to Kumbhoji II.[4] The towns of Dhoraji and Upleta were centers of trade and home to commercial Muslim communities, the Khojas, Bohras and Memons. We will see in this and subsequent chapters the important role played by Muslim merchants and traders in promoting education in Gondal and supporting Bhagvatsinh's reformist policies. In chapter 6, I will examine how Bhagvatsinh gave political protection to Muslims and created an environment favorable for trade. By the time of the 1807 Walker Settlement, Gondal was a separate state from Rajkot and Nawanagar with a Hindu, Muslim and Jain population.

Sagramji, a descendent of Kumbhoji II, married Monghiba, the daughter of Jhala Rajput Sartanjee of Minapur in 1864. A year later Monghiba gave birth to their eldest son Bhagvatsinh. Sagramji died in 1869 leaving behind an heir-apparent who was four years of age. Since Bhagvatsinh was a minor, the Kathiawar Agency oversaw the administration through a political agent stationed at Gondal. In tune with the liberal reformist climate, the minority administration spent money on public works such as

[3] For more on Bhagvatsinh's genealogy and Gondal state's history see Dave, *Short History of Gondal*. Harikrishna Lalshankar Dave was Bhagvatsinh's private secretary. Before Gondal he had worked at the Rajkumar College, Rajkot. MSA, Edu Dept, 7/683 (1885).

[4] Dave, *Short History of Gondal*, p. 25-58.

hospitals, post offices, laying down telegraph lines, the Bhavnagar-Gondal railway line[5] and building bridges to facilitate transportation over rivers.[6] The government also encouraged formal education by opening new Gujarati and Urdu schools for boys and girls and night schools for adults.[7] Men from Gondal studying at colleges across India received support from Gondal. In this manner the minority administration of Gondal continued for six years until Bhagvatsinh came of age in 1884 and assumed full powers.[8]

Making of a Liberal Reformer

Before Bhagvatsinh became the ruler of Gondal he underwent appropriate training under the watchful eye of his British tutors. Imperial officials in the 1860s firmly believed in educating young Indian princes in a British-style public school setting.[9] Under the tutelage of impartial British men the princes would receive a far superior upbringing than that provided at a sycophantic court or the "ignorant" *zenana*, or so the imperial officials argued. As per this line of thinking, Indian men and especially women were incapable of turning impressionable young boys into modern reformist rulers. This led to the establishment of princely colleges such as the Rajkumar College at Rajkot in

[5] The Bhavnagar-Gondal railway line started operating in 1881. It was managed by a committee consisting of the political agent and representatives of Bhavnagar and Gondal states. Bhavnagar and Gondal were also linked by a marriage alliance. Bhagvatsinh's sister Majirajba was married to Raja Takhtsinh. Ibid., p. 132, 138; Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 21.

[6] Dave, *Short History of Gondal*, p. 131. The minority administration was a joint administration in that it was headed by an Indian and a European. A joint administration was also put in place at Bhavnagar state after Jaswantsinh's death as his son Takhtsinh was a minor. Gaorishankar Oza and E.H. Percival acted as the Indian and European administrators respectively. Yagnik, *Gaorishankar Udayashankar*, p. 54-59.

[7] *Gujarat Shalapatra* 24:2 (February 1885).

[8] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 57-65. While the European Administrators changed multiple times, Jayashankar Lalashankar remained the sole Indian administrator in the minority government.

[9] See chapter 3 for an examination of princely education including a discussion of Indian support for princely schools.

1870 and the Mayo College at Ajmer in 1872. Bhagvatsinh spent nine years (1873-1882) at the Rajkumar College under the care of his European tutors. At first his mother Monghiba refused to send her eight year old son to live in another town. The British political agent overseeing Gondal, Captain A.M. Phillips, sent the eight year old Bhagvatsinh to Rajkumar College against Monghiba's wishes.[10]

Monghiba's refusal was in marked contrast to Bhavnagar where Raja Jaswantsinh as well as Diwan Gaorishankar Oza supported Rajkumar College and Jaswantsinh's son Takhtsinh became its first pupil.[11] Contrasting reactions to a princely education were common among Saurashtra's aristocracy. Some such as Bhavnagar sought to build a friendly diplomatic relationship with British political agents in the hopes that the imperial power would not infringe on Bhavnagar's sovereignty. Takhtsinh and his descendants studied at Rajkumar College and made sizeable monetary contributions to the institution over time. Other princely families such as the Rana of Porbandar refused to send their sons to the Rajkumar College as they correctly judged the institution as a symbol of imperial power portraying British superiority over Indian princes.[12] British political agents usually prevailed upon princely families and young heirs studied at Rajkot at least for a few years.

With Captain Phillips overruling Rani Monghiba, Bhagvatsinh left for Rajkot in 1873. The goal of a Rajkumar College education was to "make boys intelligent and to

---

[10] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 26-27.

[11] Yagnik, *Gaorishankar Udayashankar*, p. 50-51; Edwardes, *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar*, p. 50-51; *Forty Years of the Rajkumar College, Vol. 2*, p. 30-31.

[12] MSA, *Gujarat Monthly Journal*, *RNP*, Bombay Presidency (1885). The *Gujarat Monthly Journal* was published in Bombay.

give them a capacity for affairs – to give them the power to see and the will to do what is right."[13] The British hoped that a Western education in addition to forming an alliance between the imperial power and Indian princes would turn the latter into enlightened rulers. Princely education aimed not to create "pandits", but to build character and enable Indian princes to better fulfill their traditional leadership roles. Courses and examinations at the Rajkumar College were distinct from that offered at colleges in British India and the provincial education departments.[14] This was a conscious decision by the colonial government as young princes were being trained for a specific purpose, different from students in British territories who would go on to become professionals, civil servants and clerks.

Bhagvatsinh impressed all his teachers with his zeal for learning. Principal Chester Macnaghten authorized placing Bhagvatsinh in a class by himself since he had advanced so far beyond his fellow students.[15] While excelling in his course work Bhagvatsinh showed no interest in sports raising concern that his lack of physical activity would have a negative effect on his health and prevent the building of a strong physique. Apprehension showed by his instructors was valid since the primary objective of this school was to give the princes a comprehensive moral, physical and social education

[13] Dr. F.G. Selby, the acting Principal of Rajkumar College in 1883, quoted in the *Bombay Gazette*, January 20, 1883. In a resolution passed in 1898 the Political Department of Bombay Government re-emphasized the purpose of Rajkumar College as a training ground for the future rulers of India. MSA, Edu Dept, 20/416 (1898).

[14] MSA, Edu Dept, 23/4 (1903).

[15] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 98-99.

which would prepare them to become future rulers of their states.[16] Excelling at exams was not a requisite at chief's colleges. With his academic bent, Bhagvatsinh defied the expectations of his instructors. Later in life Bhagvatsinh became publicly critical of princely education that focused exclusively on learning how to play sports and acquisition of language skills. An ability to speak English with the proper accent and excelling on the cricket and polo fields, he felt, did not make an individual qualified to rule a state. Bhagvatsinh wished his Rajkumar College education had given him more of a sense of world politics, history and global economics.[17] He came to this viewpoint with age and maturity. While a student he thoroughly enjoyed his time at the princely school and in his youth continued to speak highly of the education he received.

While still a student at the Rajkumar College, the sixteen year old Bhagvatsinh married four women in a quadruple marriage ceremony on June 2, 1881. As per Monghiba's wishes, he was married to Nandkunvarba, daughter of the Maharaja of Dharampur, an offshoot of the Sisodiya dynasty of Mewar (Udaipur); to a cousin of the Raja of Vankaner; to the daughter of Jhala Kalian Singh of Minapur who was also Monghiba's brother; and to the daughter of Thakore of Chuda.[18] On Jan 8, 1883, Nandkunvarba gave birth to Bhojiraj who became the heir-apparent. Nandkunvarba, Bhagvatsinh's chief wife, played a key role in assisting him in fulfilling his duties once he became the ruler of Gondal. She shared many of Bhagvatsinh's social reformist beliefs

[16] MSA, Edu Dept, 22/242 (1890). These were the sentiments of F.C.O. Beaman, the Judicial Assistant of Kathiawar Political Agency, and were repeated over the years by many involved with the Rajkumar College.

[17] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 356-57.

[18] Ibid., p. 31.

and actively promoted female education. In the next chapter I will examine Nandkunvarba in greater detail. The British political agent wanted Bhagvatsinh's marriages postponed until he was older but Monghiba could not be persuaded.[19] In this round of the battle of wills, the Kathiawar Agency let the mother of the minor prince win. But when it came to political matters, the Agency would not budge.

Another confrontation between Monghiba and the Kathiawar Agency occurred in the year following Bhagvatsinh's marriages. In 1882, Bhagvatsinh finished his schooling at the Rajkumar College. Monghiba expected her son to at last return home and assume full control over Gondal. The British believed that at seventeen years of age Bhagvatsinh was not ready for such responsibilities.[20] They did not prevent Monghiba from arranging her son's marriage to four girls when he was sixteen, but there was no way the British were relinquishing political control over Gondal to appease her. Bhagvatsinh would become the ruler when the imperial power believed he was ready.

Towards this end, following the custom among young upper class men, his tutors suggested an extended tour of Europe, a rite of passage from boyhood to adult life.[21] Bhagvatsinh left for his tour in 1883 accompanied by Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel) G.E. Hancock of the Kathiawad political department. In addition to receiving schooling at a princely college, a guided tour of Europe was an integral part of any princely education. The purpose of such trips was to expose the future rulers to "superior" English

[19] Ibid., p. 30-31.

[20] Ibid., p. 32.

[21] Bhagvatsinh was the first prince in the Bombay Presidency to travel to England. Wilberforce-Bell, *History of Kathiawar*, p. 243.

culture and to remind them of their position in the imperial hierarchy.[22] Young princes were always accompanied by British guardians, never their parents, in an attempt to exercise effective supervision.[23] For a teenager who had never traveled beyond Saurashtra the trip to Bombay and subsequently Europe was a huge adventure. During his six month tour of Europe Bhagvatsinh kept a detailed journal of his experiences.[24] Besides being enthralled with the new sights, Bhagvatsinh reflected on various cultural, economic and political issues. The travel journal and ideas laid out in it are of particular importance as it gives the reader an insight into Bhagvatsinh's political and social philosophy from an early age and the influence of his Rajkumar College education.

On reaching England Bhagvatsinh made the requisite diplomatic visit to the India Office. He spent his time in London living as a tourist. While he enjoyed the theater and museums, he was not too impressed with the social life of the London upper class. He found society balls a waste of time and money. Bhagvatsinh made the following remarks about a fancy dress ball he attended in London:

> *I am at a loss to understand why so much time, money, and ingenuity should be wasted on the sartorial art for the sake of the ephemeral delight of an evening. I certainly would not prohibit luxury to those who have the means to indulge in it, but the labour and expenditure bestowed on it should be in proportion to the enjoyment to be derived therefrom. Luxury for its own sake is of little good.*[25]

---

[22] Sen, "The Politics of Deracination," p. 23.

[23] Lahiri, *Indians in Britain*, p. 131-33; Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire*, p. 56-57.

[24] Bhagvat Sinh Jee, Thakore Saheb of Gondal, *Journal of a Visit to England in 1883* (Bombay: Education Society's Press, Byculla, 1886).

[25] Ibid., p. 96.

Luxurious entertainment went against Bhagvatsinh's frugal nature. Many visitors to Gondal after Bhagvatsinh became the ruler commented on the simple manner in which he lived.[26] We see Bhagvatsinh's reformist beliefs developing at an earlier age as evident from his travel diary.

Bhagvatsinh felt more at home in Scotland than England. He observed many similarities between Rajput and Scottish cultures, both peoples were chivalrous, hospitable and had a strong sense of kinship. He enjoyed the scenic beauty of the Scottish countryside with its mountains and lakes.[27] Later in life when he decided to pursue medicine he chose Edinburgh University over Oxford or Cambridge as Scotland was the place for "learning and quiet pursuits of life" while England was a place of "restless activity and commercial enterprise."[28] Yet, Bhagvatsinh was not opposed to commerce or modern industry. During his reign he developed roads and railways and eliminated import and octroi duties earning him the gratitude of merchants.[29] After visiting Leeds and Liverpool during his first visit to England, Bhagvatsinh wanted Indian capitalists to start textile mills in India. Instead of being a supplier of raw materials and a market for finished British goods, India should have the capacity to produce industrial goods. As a young man Bhagvatsinh believed in the imperial power's desire to "do good." He wanted the colonial government to encourage the development of Indian industries and protect them from more advanced competitors while in infancy.[30] Bhagvatsinh remained loyal to

---

[26] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 1-12.
[27] *Journal of a Visit to England*, p. 102-18.
[28] Ibid., p. 117.
[29] Administration Report of Gondal State, 1909-1910.
[30] *Journal of a Visit to England*, p. 121-22.

the Empire throughout his life, but with age he developed a mature viewpoint and understood Britain's limited capacity (and desire) to aid its colonies with economic and social development. On becoming the ruler of Gondal in 1884, Bhagvatsinh decided to take matters in his own hands and work towards the development of his state which had been under British administration for over a decade.

At his installation ceremony on August 25, 1884, Bhagvatsinh identified his goals as the ruler of Gondal.

> *I may say that young as I am, I am fully sensible of the responsibilities now devolved upon me as a ruler of this State. I need hardly say that it will be my current desire to see that justice and order prevail in my State, that life and property are well protected, that the Kunbi enjoys the fruit of his labour, and the trader the profits of his trade, that roads are improved and communications facilitated, that education is encouraged, and provision is made for the relief of the sick poor. This, I believe, is what the British Government expect of the Native rulers in this country to do within their respective States.*[31]

The above passage from Bhagvatsinh's speech is an echo of Lord Mayo's words from 1870.[32] In a speech given to rulers of Rajputana, Mayo as Viceroy identified British expectations from Indian princes. By quoting Mayo, Bhagvatsinh showed his audience of British officials, Rajkumar College staff, Gondal state administrators and representatives of neighboring princely states his agreement with Mayo on what constituted "good"

---

[31] *Installation of H.H. Bhagvat Sinh Jee, Thakore Saheb of Gondal* (Bombay: Education Society's Press, Byculla, 1884), p. 21-22.

[32] I have included relevant passages from Mayo's speech in chapter 3.

government. By choosing to invoke Mayo, Bhagvatsinh was reassuring Bombay and the Kathiawar Agency that he could be trusted to govern as per British expectations. By casting himself as a liberal reformer, Bhagvatsinh was signaling a change from the government of his predecessors. He was adjusting to the new socio-political climate ushered in by the British Raj. Bhagvatsinh's desire and ability to adapt highlights the vitality of princely rule in India during the colonial era.

Figure 4.1 His Highness Maharaja Bhagvatsinh, GCIE
Ruler of Gondal State
Courtesy of Navlakha Palace Library

Education as a Vehicle to Build an Enlightened Citizenry

On becoming the ruler of Gondal, Bhagvatsinh continued the policies set in motion by the minority administration that governed the state before him. He surrounded himself with a staff that would enact his economic and social reform policies. Harikrishna Lalshanker Dave, First Assistant Master at the Rajkumar College, became Bhagvatsinh's private secretary in 1885.[33] The state under the leadership of its Parsi Diwan Bezanji Merwanji Damri focused on public works, irrigation and transportation projects. While the Diwan handled the state bureaucracy Bhagvatsinh concentrated on developing the education system. On his own accord, without any urging from the colonial government[34], he started the Grasia College in 1895, a school for *grasias*, who were members of the feudal aristocracy whose ancestors had played an important role in the establishment of the state.[35] *Grasias* included relatives and supporters of the ruling family. For their service the ruler gave them land and rights to its produce. These were hereditary rights passed on to successive generations.

In the fluid political conditions that existed in western India during the eighteenth century, an able *grasia* could become a king. If a man born in a *grasia* family managed to collect enough revenue from the cultivators that he could support an army and carve out a territory he could die as a king. The chaotic eighteenth century was also a time of social and political mobility. The opportunity for upward mobility for *grasias* ended with

[33] MSA, Edu Dept, 7/683 (1885).

[34] The Political Agent in Kathiawar gave Bhagvatsinh full credit in a letter to Bombay. MSA, Edu Dept, 21/267 (1900).

[35] Rajput kings of Saurashtra had Muslim soldiers in their army during the pre-colonial era. These men like their Hindu counterparts were allotted land gifts. Nineteenth-century Saurashtra consisted of Hindu as well as Muslim *grasias*.

British rule. As part of the 1807 Walker Settlement, the English East India Company recognized princes as sovereigns of their territories and *grasias* became subordinates for life.[36] With solidification of political hierarchies the disgruntled *grasia* class turned inwards. They no longer had the chance to establish dynasties of their own and were relegated to a permanent subordinate status to the royal family. Friction between the rulers and *grasias* continued to increase. The rulers saw *grasias* as parasites living off the state and asking for more land. Some *grasias* even went into outlawry when their demands were not met. The status of *grasias* deteriorated further with division of land among the various descendants and loss of soldiering as an occupation due to dismantling of princely state armies under British orders.[37] Many *grasias* could no longer live off the land they owned, and their Rajput code of honor prevented them from seeking non-martial forms of employment.

Social reformers regarded grasias as being stuck in an age of "medieval barbarism." In his writings, Behramji Malabari, the great Parsi reformer, journalist and lawyer, gave satirical examples of the feudal aristocracy living beyond their means. He was especially critical of the Muslim nobility in Gujarat who were waiting for the return of the golden age of Muslim rule.[38] The same was also true for the lower rungs of Rajput and Kathi nobility who could no longer afford the lifestyle of their ancestors. While one could hold Indian nobility responsible for failing to adapt to the colonial order, most

---

[36] Copland, *British Raj and the Indian Princes*, p. 22-25, 112.

[37] Lord Sandhurst, Governor of Bombay's speech in *The Grasia College* (Gondal: Gondal Darbari Press, 1899), p. 24-32.

[38] Behramji Malabari, *Gujarat and the Gujaratis: Pictures of Men and Manners taken from Life* (Bombay: Education Society's Press, 1884, 2nd ed.), p. 144-55.

reformers did not work towards giving these feudal households an alternate lifestyle. Bhagvatsinh was one of the few reformers who had an idea to improve their situation while being sensitive to the *grasia* sense of honor.

Through the vehicle of education, Bhagvatsinh sought to restore *grasias* to their original status, befitting people whose ancestors had helped the ruler's ancestor in establishing the state. He wanted the sons of *grasias* to receive a liberal education which would not just prepare them for professional jobs, but might also change their mindset and make them willing to accept these jobs. English language skills, knowledge of modern science and mathematics was not enough to improve the economic situation of *grasias*. They had to be willing to work in professions that were not specific to their caste. In this mission to educate the *grasias*, Bhagvatsinh faced a major hurdle, as the *grasias* were too proud to send their sons to state schools, where they would study in the company of non-*grasias*. At the same time they could not afford princely schools such as the Rajkumar and Mayo Colleges. The Kathiawar Agency had established a school for *grasias* at Wadhwan in Saurashtra in 1881, but many could not even afford that institution.[39] The answer to this problem was to open an affordable school locally for sons of *grasias.*

Bhagvatsinh also drew inspiration from the Educational Dispatch of 1854 when he started the Grasia College.[40] Since 1854, he stated, "a new era has dawned in India, and both the British Government and the Native States have recognized their duty and

[39] *Forty Years of the Rajkumar College, Vol. 6*, p. 142-49. Adm Report of Kathiawar, 1896-97.
[40] For more on the Educational Dispatch of 1854 refer to chapter 2 above.

responsibility, and are doing everything in their power to provide for the intellectual wants of various classes of people living under their jurisdictions."[41] Keeping pace with the rest of India, Bhagvatsinh decided to take a bold step and start a school for *grasias.* His Rajkumar College education had taught him of the ruler's duty to educate his people. Since the British Raj saw to the education of Indian princes, it was the responsibility of native rulers to impart liberal education to their subjects.

Visitors to Gondal never failed to compliment the Grasia College.[42] Maharaja Sayaji Rao, a like-minded reformist prince, equated Bhagvatsinh's plan to educate *grasias* to his experiment in compulsory education in the Amreli district of Baroda state.[43] In the closing decades of nineteenth century, many princely States focused on reformist causes. This was a retort to British and Indian critics of princely states; a warning against those who labeled all native rulers as despots, unable to adapt to the changing times. Many Indian princes embraced progressive policies out of self-interest, in response to demands from the dominant communities in their state, and to silence their Indian and British critics who often viewed Indian princes as "oriental despots."

The Grasia College in Gondal opened in 1897 with twenty-two students. Within two years the enrollment almost doubled to forty three. Students were Rajputs (Jadeja, Jhala or Chudasma), Kathis and Muslims, including *grasias* from other princely states.[44] While in England, Bhagvatsinh recruited S.A. Moore, a Cambridge post-graduate, to be

[41] *Grasia College*, p. 3.
[42] MSA, Edu Dept, 3/16 (1905).
[43] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 216-17.
[44] *Grasia College*, p. 16, 41-42.

the first Principal.[45] The rest of the staff consisted of Indian graduates from Bombay University. The colonial influence is evident in the Gothic-style architecture chosen by the state engineer and the inclusion of a clock tower in the center of campus. The clock tower featured prominently in British-built educational institutions in India. As a symbol of orderliness and punctuality, the clock tower represented the commencement of a new era in India.[46] An era when laziness and lethargy of Indians, or so the British complained, would be replaced by a disciplined work ethic. The clock tower was especially important in princely schools such as Rajkumar and Mayo Colleges, as they prepared the "natural" rulers of India to assume their leadership positions. A graduate of Rajkumar College, Bhagvatsinh used the princely school model for designing the Grasia College as well as other educational institutions in Gondal state.

There were many similarities in British expectations from Indian princes and Bhagvatsinh's vision for the *grasias*.[47] Bhagvatsinh and his colonial backers were convinced of the *grasia* culpability in their demise. They argued that current depravity within the class was of their own making as they lived grandly despite not having the resources to support such a lifestyle.[48] To change these habits family servants were not

---

[45] S.A. Moore received his M.A. from Cambridge. He had previously taught science at a school in Sheffield and had worked as a lecturer at the University of Wales. NAI, Foreign Dept, Internal B/93-94 (January 1897); Adm Report of Gondal State, 1896-97.

[46] Thomas R. Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision*, p. 79-80. David Lelyveld on Aligarh College: "Nothing could be greater than the contrast between the chaos of the adjacent old city and the deliberate order of the Aligarh College." David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, p. 150. In contrast to Aligarh and colonial universities in India, the Banaras Hindu University did not have a clock tower. The founders of BHU resisted the standardized culture of Western universities. They took pride in BHU being different from other modern universities and running on "Indian time." Leah Renold, *A Hindu Education: Early Years of the Banaras Hindu University* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 155-57.

[47] *Forty Years of the Rajkumar College, Vol 6*, 197-200.

[48] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 207.

allowed to accompany their wards who attended the Grasia College, a move towards making the boys self-reliant.[49] The Rajkumar College did allow servants to accompany princes to school and perform domestic duties, but servants and princes were encouraged to keep their interactions to a minimum as the former were not "suitable" companions for future rulers of India.[50] The Grasia College's concern over the presence of doting family servants matches the Kathiawar Agency's hesitations in allowing a minor prince to grow up in the sycophantic culture of princely courts.

To foster a spirit of brotherhood all students irrespective of caste and religion dined in a common hall.[51] Major (later Colonel) R. Keatinge and Sir Alexander Grant expressed a similar sentiment when they first proposed the establishment of the Rajkumar College in 1860s. Keatinge and Grant believed that a princely school would counter the "separative tendencies of isolation and aggrandizement" among the princes of Saurashtra.[52] Bhagvatsinh hoped that by studying and living together the *grasia* boys would get the chance to fraternize from an early age. Teachers made a point to not use the memorization method common among most Indian schools. Instead, students were encouraged to think critically and apply scientific concepts to everyday life following the creed laid out by Bhagvatsinh, *Vicharaya! Vicharaya!* (Think! Think!).[53] Emphasis on self-discipline, self-reliance and building "character" at the Grasia College reflected

[49] *Grasia College*, p. 20-21.

[50] *Forty Years of the Rajkumar College, Vol. 1*, p. 118-31.

[51] *Grasia College*, p. 19-20.

[52] Major Keatinge was then a political agent in Saurashtra. Sir Alexander Grant was the Director of Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency. Copland, *British Raj and the Indian Princes*, p. 121; *Forty Years of the Rajkumar College, Vol. 1*, p. 1-10, 326.

[53] Principal S.A. Moore's speech in *The Grasia College*, 14; Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 209.

Victorian influence. Through the Grasia College Bhagvatsinh was attempting to provide the *grasias* an education similar to the one he received at the Rajkumar College.

Sir Madhav Rao, former Diwan of Travancore and Baroda, visited Gondal and was impressed with the Grasia College:

> *It was the moral side of the institution that appealed to me most. From what one hears of Grasias, it required no small courage and insight on the part of His Highness to devise the present scheme for weaning them from their habits of exclusiveness. ....The College and its management will be a valuable object lesson to the institutions maintained in Madras and elsewhere for the sons of Zamindars and Polaigars….Officers competent to judge in such matters have laid particular stress on the absence of retainers and hangers on, who are generally a hindrance to development of habits of self-reliance and self-help....Altogether this is a unique institution whether we consider the originality of its conception or the patriotism that prompted its being undertaken.*[54]

Madhav Rao's observations could have been applied to the princes themselves a generation previously. Language used by reformers to describe *grasias* was similar to that used by critics of Indian princes. The aristocracy was often blamed for being backwards, socially exclusive, unwilling to adapt and living a life surrounded by sycophants. As late as mid-twentieth century, left-leaning nationalists blamed the princes for resisting change and failing to reform. Bhagvatsinh was using the language usually used to describe Indian princes and applying it to his subordinates. This transplantation

[54] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1909-10.

happened because Bhagvatsinh was Western educated. His immediate ancestors belonged to the generation that the British were reforming and the Indian princes the ones being reformed. Western education allowed Bhagvatsinh and princes of his time to take on the role of reformers and earn the honor and prestige that comes with such a mindset. This is not to minimize their concern for the feudal aristocracy who on having lost soldiering as an occupation were in need of a new source of income. Bhagvatsinh believed in the uplifting power of liberal education and cultivation of a mindset that would benefit the individual as well as Gondal state.

Bhagvatsinh was of the opinion that "education which seldom fails to ennoble and humanize the instincts" would turn *grasias* into loyal and productive members of the state.[55] Resources spent on educating the *grasias* would ultimately benefit the broader society as liberal education would make them model citizens. Many referred to Bhagvatsinh's decision to open the Grasia College as a bold step. Since interests of *grasias* often ran counter to that of the ruler, some of Bhagvatsinh's advisers professed the opinion that an educated *grasia* class could prove to be more troublesome than in its current state of ignorance. Empowering the *grasias* would only result in more threats to the power of the ruling family. Fights between *grasias* and the ruler over land rights were so frequent that the Kathiawar Agency established a special court in Rajkot in 1873 to hear such cases, the Rajasthanik court.[56] Bhagvatsinh countered these warnings by stating that the best way to inculcate good citizenship and promote loyalty among his people was

[55] Shree Bhagvat Sinhjee of Gondal, *The Spirit of Service or Public Utterances of Maharaja* (Gondal, 1935), p. 15-18.

[56] Colonel Hancock's speech in *The Grasia College*, p. 5-8.

to spread liberal education which has the power to "heal old sores."[57] Western-education would not make the *grasias* more demanding, but would help them adapt to the new socio-political climate. Instead of *grasias* and rulers constantly negotiating over rights to land and produce, they would work together for the betterment of the state, bonded by a common education. Just as the British believed in the liberal education's power to make princes loyal junior partners in the imperial project, Bhagvatsinh expected *grasias* to once again become the noble households that had in previous decades worked in the interest of the ruler.

For nineteenth-century reformers, liberal education was connected to stability. They had an unshakeable belief in liberal education's ability to create model citizens. Besides education, the entire social reformist project was connected with promoting stability. The British referred to Sahajanand Swami[58] as a social reformer because of his success in pacifying the rebellious elements of Saurashtra's population or to use colonial terminology, the "criminal tribes." Sahajanand's success with lower castes and tribals helped the English East India Company establish paramountcy over the region, earning him a place in history books as a social reformer.[59] Following in the footsteps of early nineteenth-century reformers, Bhagvatsinh believed that the ultimate goal of education and social reform was to create enlightened citizens for a modern state. His brain child, the Grasia College was a step in that direction.

---

[57] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 206.
[58] For more on Sahajanand refer to chapter 2 above.
[59] Williams, *Introduction to Swaminarayan Hinduism*, p. 1-30.

With each passing year Grasia College's enrollment increased substantially, exceeding even Bhagvatsinh's expectations. The College earned a reputation for excellence, even serving as a model for those interested in modern education. The illustrious Ismaili industrialist and philanthropist Abdul Rasul Allidina Visram of Mombasa, Kenya visited Grasia College at the recommendation of his friends.[60] He was in the process of starting the Allidina Visram High School in Mombasa and touring relevant educational institutions in India and Britain to get ideas. Visram was thoroughly impressed with the Grasia College. The Grasia College flourished for four decades after its establishment until it fell victim to its own success.

By the mid-1930s, those *grasias* who wanted to educate their sons sent them to regular high schools, which provided education at a lower cost without the frills associated with nobility.[61] While in 1890s *grasias* refused to send their sons to schools along with children of non-*grasias*, by the mid-1930s they no longer had such objections. In 1936, Grasia College's boarding house closed down due to lack of sufficient pupils. The remaining students were all day scholars. Instead of sending their sons to an exclusive school far from home, *grasias* preferred the integrated high schools closer to their residence. The decline in the College's popularity was ironically a result of its own success. Bhagvatsinh started the College because *grasias* considered it a matter of disgrace to have their sons educated in the same environment as children from

[60] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1920-21.

[61] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1934-35 and 1935-36. Effects of the changing *grasia* mindset were first felt in the 1910s when the Grasia College decided to admit non-*grasia* students. A good number of these new pupils were from Gujarati families living in East Africa, especially Muslims. Adm Report of Gondal State, 1917-1918.

commercial and peasant castes. Once the *grasia* mindset changed there was no need for an exclusive institution for them. The school served as a bridge between generations. It helped the feudal aristocracy adjust to the new era when they no longer had the resources to maintain a luxurious and socially exclusive lifestyle; a time in which they had to learn new skills and enter professions foreign to their community. Having achieved its goal the school was no longer needed by the *grasia* community and its enrollment dwindled in the mid-twentieth century.

Wrestling Control Over the State's Education Department

The Grasia College was only the first step in Bhagvatsinh's plan to develop the education system in his state. Bhagvatsinh's ambition is evident from the stipulation he set on Gondal state's donation to the Deccan Education Society in 1895. F.G. Selby, Bhagvatsinh's former tutor at the Rajkumar College was then the president of the Deccan Education Society. He was in charge of collecting funds for the establishment of the Fergusson College in Pune.[62] Bhagvatsinh donated a considerable amount from the state funds towards this endeavor with the stipulation that every year ten students from Gondal would receive free education at the upcoming Fergusson College.[63] In 1895, Bhagvatsinh's demands must have sounded far-fetched as Gondal did not have a single high school. What they show us is his vision for the future of Gondal, a time when Gondal's students would seek higher education beyond state boundaries.

[62] In 1895, Selby was also the Principal of Deccan College in Pune. The Fergusson College was named after Sir James Fergusson, the Governor of Bombay.

[63] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 168.

In order to bring about his dream, Bhagvatsinh needed free rein over his state's education system, an authority he did not have until the turn of the century. The Bombay government through the Kathiawar Agency set educational policy in nineteenth-century Saurashtra. This arrangement was a hurdle for Bhagvatsinh, leading to his wrestling for control of the education department from the Kathiawar Agency. From his early days as the ruler of Gondal, Bhagvatsinh worked to gain absolute control over setting education policy in his state and minimize the Agency's control. Other princes of Saurashtra such as Takhtsinh of Bhavnagar, Bhagvatsinh's brother-in-law, were of a similar opinion and put their request before the Bombay government.

In 1892, Takhtsinh along with rulers of seven other states accepted partial control over their education departments.[64] Under the compromise of 1892, princes had the freedom to make appointments in all schools in their jurisdiction. Bombay retained the right to send their own inspectors who forwarded the results to the princes and the colonial government. Takhtsinh accepted limited authority over his education department as an installment towards ultimately achieving complete control. Bhagvatsinh refused to accept a compromise, sending a clear message to Bombay that nothing short of complete control would satisfy him.[65]

Bhagvatsinh's desire to obtain complete control over his state's education department was an assertion of monarchical authority over all aspects of Gondal. With external policies including defense, communications and foreign relations under British

[64] The seven states were all in Saurashtra: Junagadh, Porbandar, Rajkot, Morvi, Vankaner, Palitana and Wadhwan. Three more states joined the cause in 1899: Nawanagar (Jamnagar), Dhrangadhra and Limbdi.

[65] MSA, Edu Dept, 21/267 (1900).

control, Indian princes had jurisdiction only over internal matters. In such an environment, Indian princes jealously guarded their sovereignty over domestic matters eschewing any interference from the imperial power. If Bhagvatsinh could only set Gondal's domestic policy, he wanted full authority over every state department. In 1890s, many Indian princes were extending *rajadharma* to also include modernizing policies such as building roads, railways, hospitals, schools and orphanages. By embracing liberal reformist policies princes were making themselves relevant in a socio-political climate where they were often criticized by British officials as well as Indians for failing to adjust. To prevent from being labeled as relics of the past, Indian princes turned to reform. If Bhagvatsinh wanted Gondal to become a modern state, he needed free rein. Hence his forceful request to Bombay to grant Gondal absolute control over its education department.

After Takhtsinh's death in 1896 Bhagvatsinh became the sole Saurashtra prince in the quest to achieve princely control over education departments. In 1899, Bhagvatsinh once again appealed to Bombay to grant his demands. The Political Agent in Kathiawar supported Bhagvatsinh's petition by arguing in favor of letting princes set educational policy since they already had authority over other departments in their state. Many princes of Saurashtra were products of British public schools such as the Rajkumar and Mayo Colleges. Bhavnagar state had started Samaldas College affiliated with the Bombay University, Junagadh was close to opening the Bahauddin College and Gondal had the Grasia College. The princely state of Baroda, not in Saurashtra but in Gujarat nevertheless, also had its own college. All these institutions of higher learning were

established under initiatives taken by the administration of the respective states. This trend of supporting liberal education by English-educated princes convinced the political agent that Saurashtra's states could be trusted to run their education departments in a manner that would not counter colonial policies.

Since the British controlled degree requirements through exams administered by the Bombay University (a colonial institution), schools in princely states would have to follow a curriculum that would enable their students to pass these exams. Self-interest would ensure that princely states not deviate from the standards set by colonial schools as many students from princely India would go on to pursue higher education or seek employment in British India, for which they would need a degree recognized by the colonial state. There were some in Bombay concerned about the possibility of princely schools teaching material seditious to the Empire. These were ungrounded fears as the Bombay University always had the power to censure such schools by not recognizing their credentials. Citing independent schools and colleges started by the governments of Gondal, Bhavnagar and Junagadh as evidence of the princes' ability to handle their education departments, the Department of Public Instruction also showed its support.[66]

The Bombay Government passed a resolution in March 1900 allowing First and Second class states in Saurashtra to assume complete control over their education departments.[67] The resolution stated:

---

[66] MSA, Edu Dept, 21/267 (1900).

[67] Following were classified as the First Class states of Saurashtra: Junagadh, Nawanagar, Bhavnagar, Gondal, Morvi, Dhrangadhra, Porbandar and Jafrabad, Second class states: Rajkot, Limbdi, Palitana, Vankaner, Wadhwan, Dhrol and Jasdan.

> *The Governor in Council fully sympathizes with the desire of the States for an unfettered control of their Educational administration and is glad to recognize that the Chiefs realize their responsibilities and are anxious to relieve the British Government of work which was first undertaken by them many years ago, amidst apathy and discouragement, in the hope of lessening the evils of infanticide in the Province.*[68]

As discussed in chapter 2, ending female infanticide was the first social reformist cause taken up by the British in Gujarat. The English East India Company started the Infanticide Fund in 1825 to help poor Rajputs marry their daughters. A few decades later money from the fund was used to support schools in the province. Not succeeding in completely abolishing the practice of female infanticide, social reformers turned to education to change Gujarati society. The above excerpt from the resolution acknowledges the origins of British involvement in educational matters in Saurashtra. The Western educated princes and their administrators were now ready for independent control of their educational institutions. By 1900, they had been Anglicized enough that the British could trust them to pursue an agenda compatible with colonial sensibilities. With the passing of this resolution, First and Second class states in Saurashtra gained complete control over setting the curriculum, hiring and firing teachers, maintenance and inspection of schools. The Kathiawar Agency and Department of Public Instruction happily relinquished their authority over the above matters.

[68] MSA, Edu Dept, 21/267 (1900).

Why Focus on Education?

On succeeding in his goal to have complete authority over the education department in his state, Bhagvatsinh put his plans in motion. He had an ambitious agenda and needed qualified individuals to oversee it. Bhagvatsinh hired M.A. Turkhud, a man with an illustrious career in the field of education.[69] Turkhud had been affiliated with the Rajkumar College since its inception and had served as the Vice-Principal for many years.[70] He had also served as the educational inspector for the Kathiawar Agency for close to thirty years. Bhagvatsinh could not have found a more suitable person to head his new education department. Turkhud must have found his new boss difficult since Bhagvatsinh continued to remain intimately involved with developing a new educational system despite having qualified subordinates. S.A. Moore, the Principal of Grasia College, discovered Bhagvatsinh's enthusiasm soon after he accepted his position. He was alarmed with the number of meetings Bhagvatsinh expected in the early days of the College.[71] Most of Bhagvatsinh's contemporaries did the bare minimum to prevent a British takeover of their state on charges of maladministration. Even the more activist

[69] In the various letters, reports and memoranda exchanged on the topic of education, the political agent in Saurashtra, the Department of Public Instruction in Poona and the Bombay government constantly praised Turkhud. They demonstrated concern over the elimination of Turkhud's position as the educational inspector for the Kathiawar Agency since the latter would no longer oversee education in Saurashtra once princely states assumed control. No one involved wanted a loyal and capable individual such as Turkhud to be forced to retire. Bhagvatsinh solved the problem by hiring Turkhud once the Bombay government granted his proposal to have complete control over Gondal's education department.

[70] At Rajkumar College the highest position to which an Indian could be appointed was that of Vice-Principal. The Principal had to be European.

[71] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 209.

rulers backed off after hiring capable individuals to carry out their agenda.[72] Bhagvatsinh remained involved in all aspects of his state administration, especially education. One wonders why he placed such importance on education.

Bhagvatsinh showed a keen interest in academics throughout his life. Time spent at the Rajkumar College left a deep impact on him. His tutors turned him into an enthusiastic believer in the power of liberal education. During his first visit to England in 1883, Bhagvatsinh expressed his views by writing in his journal, "education is a chief factor in the elevation of a nation."[73] On returning to Gondal he started the Grasia College to uplift the "backward" sections of the nobility. Bhagvatsinh believed that an educated Grasia class would be loyal to the state and would work towards the betterment of Gondal. After excelling at Rajkumar College, Bhagvatsinh chose to pursue a medical education in Scotland even after becoming the ruler of Gondal. His desire for further schooling was not a requirement by the Kathiawar Agency or the Bombay government and speaks of his interest in learning. A few years after he became the ruler of Gondal, Bhagvatsinh left his state in the capable hands of his Parsi *diwan* Bezanji Merwanji Damri and set sail for Scotland to study medicine. On submission of his thesis "A Short History of Aryan Medical Science" to the Edinburgh University, the faculty bestowed upon him the degree of M.D. in 1895.[74] Bhagvatsinh's interest in ancient India is evident from his thesis topic. Also evident is his desire to blend ancient Indian science with

[72] Sayaji Rao of Baroda hired capable administrators as Diwan and let them handle the state affairs. Hardiman, "The Structure of a 'Progressive' State," in *People, Princes and Paramount Power*, ed. Jeffrey, p. 113-14.

[73] *Journal of a Visit to England*, p. 246.

[74] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 174.

Western medicine. His belief in mixing the ancient with the modern, East with West, influenced many of his policies as ruler of Gondal state, especially women's education as we will see in chapter 5. Over the years Bhagvatsinh amassed many academic affiliations.[75] He always placed great importance on these titles and proudly displayed them whenever possible.

In 1887, Gondal was promoted from a Second to a First class state with a permanent increase in gun salute because of Bhagvatsinh's favorable reputation among the British. Bhagvatsinh had petitioned Lord Reay, the Governor of Bombay, for a promotion. The fact that Bhagvatsinh was asking for a raise in his class status within a few years of becoming the ruler shows that he was conscious about his position in the princely hierarchy. Around the same time that Bhagvatsinh asked for a raise in his class division and a permanent increase in his gun salute, the Governor of Bombay was planning a tour through Saurashtra to inaugurate newly laid railway lines. During 1870s and 1880s the Bombay Government was aggressively pushing for the development of railways. The goal was to connect key cities by rail in order to facilitate trade and transport.

In 1887, the Bombay government proposed connecting the states of Gondal and Porbandar by rail. Since the two involved states were bearing the cost of construction and maintenance they naturally expected to have a say in which cities the railway line would

[75] Bhagvatsinh was admitted as a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. Sir James Fergusson, the Governor of Bombay, appointed Bhagvatsinh a Fellow of the Bombay University.

connect. Bhagvatsinh preferred that the line pass through his capital city of Gondal.[76] The Bombay government picked the city of Dhoraji since it was the trade center in Gondal. To convince Bhagvatsinh to shelve his plan for Gondal city the Bombay government with the Government of India's approval raised Gondal's status from Second to First Class and increased its gun salute from nine to eleven guns before the Governor's railway promotion tour through Saurashtra.[77] This strategy paid handsomely and Lord Reay, the Governor of Bombay, during his December 1887 visit to Dhoraji, was able to inaugurate the building of the Gondal-Porbandar railway.[78] The main reason the Government of India agreed to raise Gondal state's status was to make Bhagvatsinh more amenable to building the railway line from Dhoraji instead of his capital city of Gondal. But the fact that Bhagvatsinh was "an intelligent man from honorable lineage"[79] made the central government's decision easier.

As seen from this railway incident, Bhagvatsinh was willing to follow Bombay's decisions given the right incentive. He was conscious of his position in the princely hierarchy of Saurashtra. His neighboring states of Bhavnagar, Nawanagar, Junagadh and Porbandar were all First Class states. Bhagvatsinh was at the Rajkumar College at the same time as some of the princes from the above-mentioned states. Gondal also had marital ties with Bhavnagar state. Bhagvatsinh from a young age wanted to be in the same league as his neighbors and school colleagues. Such a desire led him to enact

[76] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 136-48.

[77] NAI, Foreign Dept, Internal A/170-72 (November 1887); NAI, Foreign Dept, Internal A/ 218-23 (January 1888).

[78] The Dhoraji-Porbandar railway line was opened in April 1893 by Lord Harris, the Governor of Bombay. Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 136-48.

[79] NAI, Foreign Dept, Internal A/170-172 (November 1887).

developmental and reformist policies in his state to enhance his status in the imperial hierarchy and to cultivate a favorable opinion with influential peoples in princely and British India. Bhagvatsinh sought to become a model ruler and to improve his status in Saurashtra and later at the all-India level.

Despite being a ruler of one of the smaller princely states, Bhagvatsinh received nationwide recognition. Dadabhai Naoroji, the first Indian to become a Member of the British Parliament and the father of Indian nationalism was an acquaintance of Bhagvatsinh. Naoroji made the biography of Bhagvatsinh (which I have relied on for this chapter) possible by encouraging the author, Nihal Singh, to meet the ruler. Even before Naoroji, Singh had heard of Bhagvatsinh from an English journalist. Singh was so impressed with Bhagvatsinh and his family whom he met on a visit to Gondal in 1910 that he became the ruler's biographer. In addition to Naoroji, Bhagvatsinh was on the radar of other Indians due to his actions. During the terrible famine in Saurashtra from 1897-1901, Bhagvatsinh ordered relief works for the hungry, poor, aged, pregnant women and children. This caught the attention of *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta), *Hindu* (Madras), *The Times of India* (Bombay) and various other Indian newspapers who praised Gondal's relief efforts.[80] Both British and Indians referred to Bhagvatsinh as a model ruler, or an enlightened ruler, and above all a scholar.[81] The political agent in

[80] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 230.
[81] Allen and Dwivedi, *Lives of the Indian Princes*, p. 90.

Kathiawar considered Bhagvatsinh a scholar and had full confidence that the latter would turn his state's education department into a model to be emulated by others.[82]

Figure 4.2 His Highness Maharaja Shri Bhagvatsinh in his Library

Courtesy of Navlakha Palace Library

[82] MSA, Edu Dept, 21/267 (1900).

Bhagvatsinh's reputation as a scholar went beyond the borders of Saurashtra and Bombay Presidency. In 1910, the Begam of Bhopal proposed to start a university for princes. Since the university would cater to princes at the national level, Daly College in Indore (the princely school closest to Bhopal) proposed names of four princes from different regions that should be invited to join the committee which would oversee the establishment of the university. By this time Bhagvatsinh had served on the managing committee of the Rajkumar College for most of his adult life. Due to his reputation as an enlightened prince interested in educational matters, Daly College invited Bhagvatsinh to join the committee for a princely university.[83] He attended the conference organized by the Viceroy in March 1913 to oversee the establishment of a university for princes.[84] The plan to build a princely university ultimately fell through, but Bhagvatsinh's involvement in such a major issue shows the high regard that the colonial government and other princes had for him. Bhagvatsinh did not earn international recognition because he was the ruler of a big state such as Hyderabad or Baroda. It was his reputation as a scholar, as an educated and enlightened prince that earned him respect.

In 1921, Gondal received a seat in the Chamber of Princes surpassing other Saurashtra states. The Prince of Rajkot was particularly rankled by this decision since the state of Gondal had been established by a junior branch of the Rajkot royal family. He complained to the Bombay Government and demanded that Rajkot receive a seat in the

[83] NAI, Foreign Dept, Internal A/64-65 (June 1910).
[84] NAI, F & P, General A/162-64 (June 1914).

Chamber of Princes, but met no success.[85] Bhagvatsinh had achieved upward mobility in the princely hierarchy on his record as a ruler. His success in improving his position led Bhagvatsinh to believe that others could also achieve a similar result. Bhagvatsinh placed great importance upon liberal education as it had benefited him tremendously. If a liberal education could make the ruler of a small princely state an acquaintance of men such as the Viceroy, Dadabhai Naoroji and various Governors of Bombay, then its uplifting power could also be applied to the rest of the population.

With this faith in a liberal education, Bhagvatsinh started schools for boys and girls across the state. The three main schools for boys were the Grasia College and the Sagramji High School in Gondal city and Bhagvatsinhji High School in Dhoraji (see figure 4.3 below). Boys who wanted to pursue further education after high school received scholarships from the state.[86] Impressed with Gondal's record, neighboring princes also set up scholarships for Gondal's students. To commemorate Bhagvatsinh's twenty-five years as the ruler of Gondal, the Maharaja of Bhavnagar announced the foundation of an annual prize given to the girl who came first in the highest class of the Monghiba Girls High School.[87] A few years later, during a visit to Gondal, Sayaji Rao of Baroda started a scholarship awarded annually to one student of Gondal state to pursue university education.[88] Graduates from high schools in Gondal went on to study at the

---

[85] Copland, *British Raj and the Indian Princes*, p. 246.

[86] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1893-94. The earliest state scholarships were started in 1893-94. They assisted boys from Gondal state with their education in Bombay, Pune and cities across Gujarat. In the subsequent years the number of state scholarships continued to increase in numbers and amount of support.

[87] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1909-10

[88] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1913-14.

Samaldas College in Bhavnagar, Bahauddin College in Junagadh, Gujarat College in Ahmedabad and the Fergusson College in Pune. A majority of these prize-winners and graduates who went on to pursue a college education belonged to the traditionally literate Brahman or Vania castes. This caste dynamic began to change after 1920 with more students from agricultural backgrounds. In the next section we will consider the reasons for this change and why Bhagvatsinh wanted his cultivators to send their children to state schools.

Figure 4.3 Bhagvatsinhji High School, Dhoraji

Courtesy of Navlakha Palace Library

Catering to Cultivators

Once Bhagvatsinh gained sole authority over his education department, number of schools in the state expanded continuously. Uplifting the *grasias* had been Bhagvatsinh's first priority. By 1934, the education budget for the state was nineteen times greater than when Gondal was under British administration during Bhagvatsinh's minority.[89] This increase in the education budget did not include money spent on building and remodeling schools which came from the public works department. Baroda, another progressive state, also saw a similar increase in spending on education and public works. Between 1876 and 1935, Baroda state's expenditure on education rose from 1 to 17 percent and on public works from 5 to 13 percent. In the same time frame, state expenditure on the army, police force and bureaucracy declined from 70 to 33 percent.[90] Princely state budgets post-1870s apportioned a greater amount to education and public works than ever before as the British Raj looked after their defense needs. As seen in the previous chapter, many princely states post-1870 adopted progressive policies such as promotion of education, building of railway lines and hospitals to enhance their monarchical authority. It is in this context that we can understand Bhagvatsinh's decision to promote education among his cultivators as an attempt to maintain the amicable relationship between the ruler and cultivators.

---

[89] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 355.

[90] Hardiman, "The Structure of a 'Progressive' State," in *People, Princes and Paramount Power*, ed. Jeffrey, p. 117.

To spread literacy among lower castes, in 1895, the education department made education free for boys from cultivator castes in state schools.[91] State schools also taught vocational skills from 1920 to attract lower castes. In the twentieth century there was a significant increase in school going students from lower castes, including the existence of separate facilities for them.[92] The shift in focus from sons of *grasias* in the late nineteenth century to the sons of agriculturalists in the first decade of the twentieth century reflected ongoing socio-political changes in Gondal as well as other parts of India. The urban middle class reformers who had previously only concentrated on members of their own community now began to realize that there was a world outside the cities.[93] This was an effect of the active participation of agriculturalists and other rural peoples, particularly Patidars (the landed peasantry), in Gandhian *satyagrahas*.[94] Though Brahmans and Vanias continued their dominance, there was an increase in influence of Patidars. Gandhian *satyagrahas* in Kheda and Bardoli introduced villagers and peasants to the middle class who started grappling with how to include these people in the reformist and nationalist project. Bhagvatsinh, the ruler of a primarily agricultural state, was quick to adapt to the changing climate.

Bhagvatsinh did not need Gandhian *satyagrahas* to remind him of the importance of agriculturalists. Cultivators had played an important role in Gondal's history with one of its more illustrious rulers, Kumbhoji II, referring to them as "golden trees" for their

---

[91] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1895-96.

[92] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1925-26.

[93] Isaka, "Gujarati Elites and the Construction of a Regional Identity" in *Beyond Representation*, ed. Bates (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 162.

[94] David Hardiman, *Peasant Nationalists of Gujarat: Kheda District 1917-1934* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981).

productivity. Bhagvatsinh re-introduced this term in the people's imagination by using it in public addresses. He also refreshed the story of Kumbhoji II's encounter with a Gondal peasant in people's historical memory. The story goes that Kumbhoji encountered a cultivator whose cart was stuck in mud. The cultivator, not recognizing Kumbhoji, asked for help which was freely rendered. The two men managed to dislodge the wheel. Seeing that the cart was filled with belongings Kumbhoji asked the cultivator where he was headed. The man replied that he was going to live in a neighboring chief's territory since one of Gondal's revenue officers was an extortionist. Kumbhoji proceeded to ask the man whether his new ruler would be willing to lend a hand next time his cart got stuck in the mud. On realizing the identity of the man who had helped him the cultivator decided to continue living in Gondal, won over by his king's actions. The revenue officer was removed from his post by Kumbhoji. This story surfaces in various histories of Gondal state written during Bhagvatsinh's time.[95] By revisiting this incident Bhagvatsinh was clearly emphasizing the importance of cultivators and the duty of the ruler to see to their welfare.

In primarily agrarian states, the ruler sought to cultivate loyalty among the upper level of the peasantry. In 1875, Diwan Madhav Rao of Baroda reduced land revenue and gave ownership rights in land to village shareholders. This created a larger class of landowning peasant cultivators loyal to the Gaekwad.[96] The state also made continuous reductions in land revenue through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and

---

[95] Dave, *Short History of Gondal*, p. 52-54.

[96] Hardiman, "The Structure of a 'Progressive' State," in *People, Princes and Paramount Power*, ed. Jeffrey, p. 115.

built schools and public works for peasants. Bhagvatsinh followed in Baroda's footsteps and periodically reduced revenue taken from the peasantry. He instructed his revenue minister, Krishnashankar Lalshankar Dave, to devise a new system of collecting revenue. The existing system in 1887 divided land into two classes: the Alienated lands belonging to the *bhayat*[97] where the state had no occupancy or revenue rights and the *khalsa* lands owned by the state and leased to cultivators. The new system of revenue collection was introduced in 1893 in state owned *khalsa* villages under which cultivators paid revenue in cash (*vighoti*) instead of kind (*bhagbatai*). In addition to monetizing agriculture, under the *vighoti* system upper level cultivators received ownership of the land that they had previously leased from the state.[98] Through Bhagvatsinh and Dave's actions we can see that similar to Baroda, Gondal also developed an alliance between the ruler and the landowning peasantry. Historically, cultivators had never owned land as it belonged to the ruler. In *Ras Mala*, Forbes mentions cultivators migrating to states were land was more abundant and cultivators were not exploited.[99] Giving the village share-holders ownership of land was a new decision, but only the first step in strengthening the alliance between agricultural castes and the ruler. Formal education came next.

Since a majority of Gondal's population consisted of agriculturalists, Bhagvatsinh came to the conclusion that literacy needed to be promoted beyond the literate castes if Gondal was going to be a modern state. Just as the Grasia College had helped the feudal aristocracy adjust to the socio-political order brought about by the British Raj, schools

---

[97] *Bhayat* (also known as *bhayad*) were landholding junior members of the royal family.
[98] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 176-85.
[99] Forbes, *Ras Mala*, p. 543-45.

catering to the children of the peasantry would prepare that section of the population for the twentieth century. With Bhagvatsinh the "enlightened patriarch" as the architect, the education department expanded into villages and set a curriculum that reflected the composition of its student body population. Education became caste-specific. While children from upper caste families were trained for professional jobs, those from lower castes were taught to improve their vocational skills. This was in many ways an extension of the two tier system set by the British where the middle class students went to colonial schools to become administrators and the Indian princes went to exclusive schools that prepared them to be just, efficient rulers and loyal junior imperial partners. In the twentieth century a third tier was added to this system with the start of schools that would prepare the vast bulk of the population to become better farmers and artisans.

Hardiman argues that the Gaekwad promoted education among Baroda's agriculturalists to solidify his alliance with them. Baroda's bureaucracy before 1875 had consisted mainly of Marathas. Baroda would have to give the Gujarati urban classes and landholding peasantry the chance to enter the state bureaucracy which held ultimate power over the state affairs. With the state's need to cultivate stronger ties with its population, there was a remarkable increase in the number of Gujarati Brahmans, Vanias, Muslims and ultimately Patidars (landed peasantry) in the state bureaucracy.[100] Since entry to the state bureaucracy was limited to those with a formal education, there was a need to expand education at the village level and Baroda did just that. The princely states

[100] Hardiman, "The Structure of a 'Progressive' State," in *People, Princes and Paramount Power*, ed. Jeffrey, p. 118-19.

of Saurashtra also had educational requirements for entry to the state bureaucracy. As a result they too made a concentrated effort in the twentieth century to build more schools in villages so that members of the landed peasantry could become a part of the state administration.[101]

Initially, there was little interest from the agricultural castes in village schools.[102] To make formal schooling more popular Gondal decided to add vocational training to the curriculum. Besides reading, writing, and arithmetic, agricultural science and gardening were the key subjects. The education department took great care to not create an atmosphere where manual labor was looked down upon or life in the village considered inferior to a desk job in the city. Children were taught to value the dignity of labor. One of the major concerns of non-literate castes was that their children, on receiving a formal education, would consider manual labor beneath them. To avoid such a situation Gondal's schools presented the simplicity of village life in a positive light, discouraging its young generation from leaving behind their ancestral occupations and migrating to the city. *Adarsh Shikshan*, textbooks specially compiled for Gondal's schools praised nature, life in the countryside and focused on joys of living a simple life in the village.[103] These textbooks emerged out of Bhagvatsinh's dissatisfaction with teaching materials used in Gondal's schools as they were too Westernized and not conducive for an agricultural

[101] Administration reports of various princely states of Saurashtra in the first three decades of the twentieth century show the rapid increase in number of schools, especially at the village level.

[102] Adm Reports of Bhavnagar State, various years; Adm Reports of Gondal State, various years.

[103] *Adarsh Shikshan*, Levels I-VI, 6 volumes (Gondal: Education Department).

state. In 1926, he commissioned the writing of textbooks for an Indian audience, these books incorporated indigenous knowledge and culture.[104]

Teachers too underwent special training at the Adhyapan Mandir (Training center for teachers) where they were taught to respect their students' agricultural background, to not consider themselves superior to illiterate peoples. Even though Rajkot had training colleges for male and female teachers established in 1866 and 1885 respectively, Bhagvatsinh started Adhyapan Mandir in Gondal in 1927. The college in Rajkot served all of Saurashtra and could not meet Gondal's needs. One year Gondal asked for thirty-seven teachers and the college gave only two. After that Bhagvatsinh decided to start his own institution to meet the increasing demands for teachers in his state.[105] Bahecherlal Patel, a cultivator by caste, headed the training college. It was his job to ensure that Gondal's teachers were professionally and culturally equipped to teach students from agricultural castes. Children from such a background were the first generation in their community to receive a formal education. Gondal's training department saw to it that the teachers were prepared to sensitively deal with any opposition that might surface from a community that had only recently been exposed to formal education. The education department encouraged educated members of the agricultural castes to become teachers.

Just as the British used English-educated Indians as intermediaries to connect the imperial power to the bulk of the population, Gondal state recruited teachers from agricultural castes to promote literacy among historically illiterate castes. If Bhagvatsinh

---

[104] The *Adarsh Shikshan* textbooks catered to an Indian audience by embracing indigenous culture through use of stories from Indian epics as opposed to European novels. Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 348-52.

[105] Ibid., p. 345-46.

wanted participation from the agricultural castes in the state administration, he would need to educate them first. These new initiatives targeting peoples who come from illiterate backgrounds were attempts by Bhagvatsinh to solidify his alliance with the bulk of the population.

While children were the main focus there were certain programs initiated for adults. One such initiative was a circulating library of Gujarati books that traveled through villages. Books were sent to families for a certain number of days and then transferred to neighbors. A circulating library for women also existed, which housed books dealing with religion, hygiene, domestic economy, nursing and art.[106] The education department published *vanchan mala* (reading books) to encourage reading among its adult population. The state also encouraged literate individuals to voluntarily teach the written script to unlettered people.[107] The education department worked in an activist manner to promote literacy among the state's entire population. Educators worked with the belief that ignorance was more costly than education; an ingeniously devised constitution cannot save an uneducated proletariat from disaster. To achieve its goals the state had to create a culture that valued education, in this endeavor it received ample financial backing from its ruler. Not limiting itself to historically literate castes, the education department in the twentieth century expanded its reach in the villages among both the young and the old. Along with agriculturalists the education department also had its sights set on religious minorities, the most prominent being the Muslims.

---

[106] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1936-37.
[107] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1931-32.

Encouraging Education among Muslims

North Indian Muslims faced a traumatic adjustment after the decline of the Mughal Empire; an adjustment that started in the eighteenth century with the rise of regional kingdoms due to the waning Mughal power after Aurangzeb's death in 1707. The Deoband Madrasah and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Aligarh Movement were born from such an environment. With the successful suppression of the 1857 uprising, most *ulama* (learned men in the Islamic sciences and religion) came to terms with the continued British presence in the Indian political sphere. Inspired by Shah Waliyullah and the Firangi Mahal tradition, Rashid Ahmad and Muhammad Qasim established the Deoband Madrasah in 1867 to preserve spirituality and religion among Muslims while living under British rule. These new *madrasas* imparted traditional Islamic learning using Persian and Arabic texts in a Western-style institution with a curriculum of study, a professional staff, a separate school building and financed by public donations. Deoband received eighty percent of its financial contributions from urban Muslims highly affected by the change in north Indian political leadership. The *ulama*, along with government officials and landlords, belonged to the *ashraf*[108] (noble or respectable) class and were deeply influenced by their class colleagues. *Ashraf* Muslims were attracted to the teachings of Deoband as by stressing the moral and religious superiority of Islam over

[108] *Ashraf* Muslims also include those who trace their ancestry to the Prophet Muhammad, his companions, or the ruling classes of India.

Christianity, the *ulama* instilled self-pride among their followers while allowing them to continue to be employed by the British Raj.[109]

The Aligarh Movement was pioneered by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, the most important Westernizing cultural reformer among Indian Muslims. One of the products of the Aligarh Movement was the establishment of a Cambridge-style college at Aligarh in northern India in 1875. Aligarh gave birth to an English-educated Indian Muslim community ready to take leadership roles in twentieth-century Indian politics.[110] Aligarh attracted families who wanted their sons to succeed in the colonial administrative sphere without jeopardizing their position in the Muslim community. Nineteenth-century audiences for the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Deoband *madrasa* and the Aligarh Movement were urban Indians, upper-caste Hindus or *ashraf* Muslims, seeking employment from the British Raj. A Western education for all these communities was a means to the end goal of continuing in their hereditary profession of state service.

While the most popular (and most studied) reform organizations among Muslims existed in northern India, the Bombay Presidency also had its share of reformist Muslims. Badruddin and Camruddin Tyabji of Bombay founded the *Anjuman-i-Islam* in 1876.[111] Sons of Tyab Ali, a prosperous cotton merchant and pillar of the Sulemaini Bohra community, the two brothers played a key role in encouraging education among Muslim men and women. The *anjuman* had branches all across western India, including Saurashtra, but its popularity decreased outside the urban centers of Bombay and

[109] Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*.

[110] Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*.

[111] Badruddin Tyabji is the best known member of the family as he was heavily involved in the Indian National Congress. The Tyabji family was active in nationalist politics and supported Gandhi.

Karachi. While active in organizing relief efforts in times of calamities, the *anjumans* of Saurashtra were not particularly active in promoting education among Muslims in the princely states of western India. The Muslims of Saurashtra developed a reputation of not having an inclination towards modern education. As early as the 1880s on a visit to Gondal, Lord Reay the Governor of Bombay noticed a marked difference in the graduation rate of Muslim and Hindu students.[112] He encouraged Muslims to work towards reversing this trend as lack of education would hurt the community.

There was great interest in primary education among Muslims, but enrollment drastically declined at the secondary level and above. Since a majority of Gujarati Muslims were petty traders, learning how to read, write and basic arithmetic skills were essential. But they saw no reason to keep their sons in school once they had acquired these basic skills. Further schooling was a waste of time delaying the young boy's eventual entry into the family profession. Some even considered higher education a threat as it could result in boys losing interest in trade and hurting the family business.[113] To maintain the status quo, Muslims sent their sons and daughters to religious schools where they were taught Koran and basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills.[114] Muslim attitudes towards formal education changed in the twentieth century once the commercial world of the Gujarati merchant integrated with the developing modern business sector. In chapter 6, I examine how and why Muslim, Hindu and Jain Gujarati merchants started

[112] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 153-54.

[113] Ibid., p. 352-53.

[114] M.A. Turkhud, *Report on the Progress of Education in Kathiawad during the year 1899-1900* (Rajkot, 1900). Despite the title, the report takes into account figures from 1891-1900. Turkhud was the educational inspector of Saurashtra during those years. He later headed Bhagvatsinh's education department.

supporting schools and advocated education among members of their own caste or religious communities.

Muslims were not alone in viewing education as a threat to their lifestyle; Hindu traders had a similar mindset. Yet, Muslims stood out in Gujarat as they did not have any group equivalent to Gujarati Brahmans. When one examines Gujarati Hindus pursuing higher education and graduating from high school or university, most of them are Brahmans. Unlike north India, in Gujarat there was no significant class of Muslims that served as administrators. Most administrative positions were filled by Brahmans. Even Junagadh, a state with a long history of Muslim rulers, had Brahman *diwans*. As Gujarati Muslims did not have a history of state service they saw no need to adopt English education. Unlike their religious brethren in north India who needed to learn English in order to survive economically and maintain high social status, Muslims of Saurashtra were not tied to the written word. Hence, Muslims of Gondal state who were overwhelmingly well entrenched in trade and often more prosperous than their Hindu professional counterparts, received much attention from social reformers when they compared education levels between Hindus and Muslims.

Bhagvatsinh with the mindset of a social reformer did not understand why Gondal's Muslims were not interested in higher education. He did not see any merit in the prevailing viewpoint that education deterred Muslim boys from excelling in trade. He gave full support to *madrasas* with the state treating them as grant-in-aid institutions. The state supported various private schools that taught in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Gujarati and

Sanskrit.[115] Rani Nandkunvarba (Bhagvatsinh's wife) did her share by frequently visiting *madrasas* to distribute prizes or supporting them through donations.[116] She was very popular among the Muslim community in the commercial cities of Dhoraji and Upleta with various hospitals, schools and orphanages bearing her name. With their combined efforts, Nandkunvarba and Bhagvatsinh convinced wealthy Muslims to donate for the upkeep of various *madrasas*.[117] One such individual was Habib Abdul Gani who established a prize fund for Memon students at Sagramji Boys High School and Monghiba Girls High School.[118] In order to bridge the gap created due to Hindu boys going to Gujarati schools and Muslim boys going to Urdu schools, Bhagvatsinh provided a playground which was common to both the schools, thus facilitating interaction among children of different religious communities.[119] The royal family's actions did have an effect on the Muslim community with a steady, though modest, increase in number of schools and students through the first half of the twentieth century.

Conclusion

By the late nineteenth century there was a generation of Indian princes that had spent formative years of their lives in an English-style public school. These men had

---

[115] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1909-10.

[116] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1915-16.

[117] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1925-26

[118] *Charitable Endowment Funds taken over by the Government of Saurashtra from the Covenanting States and Estates* (Jamnagar: Government of Saurashtra Press, 1951). Various princely states of Saurashtra had set up funds at educational and medical institutions with contributions from the state budgets or private sources. When the princely states merged with independent India the new government converted funds into trusts. Most educational funds were set up by Gondal and Bhavnagar states, 145 and 105 respectively.

[119] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 154

received a liberal education and often had an Anglicized outlook on life. Bhagvatsinh of Gondal was one such individual who had tremendous faith in the power of liberal education. His pursuit of knowledge had opened doors which otherwise would have been closed to the ruler of a moderately sized princely state. His love for learning resulted in the development of a favorable reputation among high ranking imperial officials in India and Britain as well as Indian nationalists such as Dadabhai Naoroji. Bhagvatsinh's liberal policies received recognition in major Indian newspapers further solidifying his belief in the uplifting capacities of liberal education. Bhagvatsinh started the Grasia College to help the feudal aristocracy, to provide this once illustrious segment of his population with a modern education that would broaden their opportunities for employment. A liberal education would instill self-discipline and self-reliance in *grasias* and help them adapt to a world where they no longer had the resources to live a life of privilege and extravagance. Bhagvatsinh hoped that an educated landlord class would result in political stability. Just as the British believed that an Anglicized Indian aristocracy would serve as a bulwark against anti-imperial sentiment, Bhagvatsinh expected his educated *grasias* to work in the interest of the state.

With growing involvement of the peasantry in nationalist activities, the urban middle class came in contact with the world of Indian villages. Bhagvatsinh, the ruler of a large agricultural population, quickly realized the need to extend education to these sections of the population. Having already convinced the British to hand over complete control over the education department, Bhagvatsinh implemented his educational policies throughout the state. Village schools were geared towards agricultural castes and

equipped with specially trained teachers. Curriculum in village schools differed from those in urban areas as education became caste specific. While upper caste students were trained for professional jobs, lower castes received vocational training. Bhagvatsinh did not want educated members of agricultural castes leaving Gondal in favor of a desk job in British India. It was not in Gondal's interest to produce a generation that would move to the cities leaving behind their family occupation. Bhagvatsinh's education policy was shaped by his faith in the beneficial effects of liberal education. It was also a result of the state making the pragmatic decision to make it possible for the landed cultivators to enter the professionalized administrative bureaucracy by providing them with a formal education. With urban middle class Indian nationalists reaching out to the peasantry in colonial India, it was imperative that Bhagvatsinh strengthen his relations with the upper crust of the peasantry before they turn to the nationalists.

For Bhagvatsinh, the ultimate goal of his educational policies was to enhance his sovereignty. He was aware of ongoing socio-political changes in other princely states and British India. Taking the initiative and building the Grasia College, demanding complete control over his education department, and promoting education among agriculturalists were all attempts by Bhagvatsinh to establish his authority over his state. Bhagvatsinh became a reformer and modernizer out of conviction as well as to enhance his monarchical authority. In this he was similar to his brother-in-law Takhtsinh, the ruler of Bhavnagar, who started the Samaldas College for similar reasons. Bhagvatsinh moved up the princely hierarchy and achieved recognition for his educational policies from the imperial government as well as Indian nationalists. Bhagvatsinh's ability to change his

educational policies and adapt highlights the vibrancy of Indian kingship during the colonial era. This vibrancy existed in the late nineteenth century and continued on into the twentieth century as shown above. Bhagvatsinh was able to shift his focus from the feudal aristocracy to the cultivators, especially the landed peasantry, in response to ongoing changes in neighboring British Indian provinces.

Map 4.1 Map of Gondal State

Courtesy of Navlakha Palace Library

Chapter 5

Reformed Women Will Bring Forth the Golden Age

Bhagvatsinh's upbringing at the Rajkumar College led him to believe that a liberal education would result in political stability. A good education was one that uplifted people from their "ignorant" and "backward" state and helped them adjust to modernity. Bhagvatsinh along with reformers of his generation used the same rationale when it came to women's education. Reformist philosophies that guided education for lower classes and women were remarkably similar as they both originated from a concern over "backward" people. This chapter examines the gendered nature of social reform in India and women-centric reformist efforts in princely and British Gujarat. I argue that as a result of the various social reform movements, middle class domestic culture triumphed. We will see how even aristocratic women promoted middle class values in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I will discuss the intersection of liberal ideas from England and Orientalist ideas of the Hindu Golden Age in reformist thought. Even though Anglicized men such as Bhagvatsinh were a product of a liberal education, they were still influenced by pre-colonial socio-religious reformers such as Sahajanand Swami. Inspired by the reformist climate, traditionally educated women of Gondal's royal family started sponsoring schools for girls from the mid-nineteenth century. Accustomed to patronizing temples, hospitals and orphanages, these women regarded supporting educational institutions as an extension of their political and religious duties.

The religious and the secular were intertwined when it came to promotion of women's education.

Rani Monghiba, Bhagvatsinh's mother, was a follower of Swaminarayan (Sahajanand Swami) and Vedic Hinduism.[1] She named her eldest son Bhagvatsinh after consulting Shree Gunatitananda, a Swaminarayan ascetic who headed the sect's temple in Gondal.[2] Due to Gunatitananda's influence Monghiba lived a religious and frugal life. She developed her views on a woman's position in society through her association with holy men. She supported women's education as an educated woman could better discharge her conjugal and maternal responsibilities. This view of women as wives and mothers was a staple of nineteenth-century reformist thought and shaped women's education in India.

The Monghiba School for Girls started in 1858, a year after Diwan Gaorishankar Oza started the girls' school in Bhavnagar.[3] It is important to highlight Monghiba as she not only started the first girls' school in Gondal state but was also a great influence in her son's life: "He [Bhagvatsinh] owes to his mother the financial genius, the love for extreme simplicity of living and the deep regard for all sentient creatures that have

[1] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 19. Sagramji, Bhagvatsinh's father, had started building a Swaminarayan temple. On his death, Monghiba oversaw the temple's completion. Dave, *Short History of Gondal*, p. 129-30.

[2] *Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha* (BAPS) followers regard Gunatitanand Swami as the spiritual successor to Swaminarayan (Sahajanand). Members of BAPS assert that on several occasions Swaminarayan revealed to devotees that Gunatitanand Swami was to be his spiritual successor. BAPS are a breakaway group from the Swaminarayan Sampradaya and have a considerable following in the Gujarati diaspora in United States, Great Britain and Africa. In the past two decades they have also expanded in India.

[3] Monghiba's daughter Majirajba was married to Raja Takhtsinh of Bhavnagar.

characterized him throughout his life."[4] While his English education at Rajkumar College (the Eton of India), shaped Bhagvatsinh's educational policy, when it came to women's education he was following in his mother's footsteps. In order to understand Monghiba and Bhagvatsinh's education policies, especially regarding women, we need to first examine the reformist climate in mid-late nineteenth-century India.

Keeping in tune with the reformist tradition of nineteenth century, Bhagvatsinh placed great emphasis on women's education. The nineteenth century can aptly be titled as the "century of reform." People across the world experienced many reform movements. In the United States and Europe there were temperance groups, humanitarian reformers worked to improve conditions in prisons, health reformers wanted to change women's dress, and the most radical of all, the abolitionists and the suffragists. In South Asia, reform focused on social issues such as ending female infanticide, widow-remarriage, discontinuing child marriages and promoting literacy. The initial impetus for these reforms came from European critiques of Indian religions and cultures. Following a classificatory view of civilizations, Europeans used the treatment of women as a scale to designate cultures on the ladder of progress. Focus on gender became an important component of all social and religious reforms in India. Both the liberal reformers of the 1820s-1870s and the cultural revivalists who started showing their influence after the 1870s had strong opinions on gendered topics.

Concern over the position of women was not unique to reform movements originating during the colonial era, under British influence. At numerous times in South

[4] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 21

Asian history, dissenting movements have given women more rights and freedom. Jainism and Buddhism in sixth and fifth centuries BC allowed women to join religious orders. Virashaivism, a religious reform movement in twelfth-century South India, considered men and women as equal, allowed widow-remarriage, condemned child and arranged marriage, and did not consider menstruating women polluted.[5] Even Chaitanya who focused on devotionalism rather than dissent permitted widow remarriage.[6] Socio-religious reform in India has a strong tradition of restructuring women's role in society. Indian reformers in the colonial era while responding to British criticisms of gender relations were also drawing inspiration from their own past.

English Utilitarians such as James and John Stuart Mill used the position of women in society as a yardstick to determine a nation's rank in the hierarchy of civilizations. They concluded that India was a backward country since it kept its women in seclusion or prevented them from receiving a formal education. Indian reformers in turn adopted this hierarchical view of civilizations and worked to improve their position on the scale set by Europeans. The end goal of these efforts was to improve the position of women in Indian society thereby bringing about a national revival. Locating women as the grounds for revival of the community, be it along caste, religion, or national lines was an idea widespread across India.[7] The goal of both Hindu and Muslim social reform was to educate not just men but also women as both needed to be uplifted in order to ensure the regeneration of the community. Rammohan Roy argued women's enlightenment was

[5] Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements*, p. 10-11.

[6] Ibid., p. 13.

[7] Minault, *Secluded Scholars*; Forbes, *Women in Modern India*; Neera Desai, *Social Change in Gujarat: A Study of Nineteenth Century Gujarati Society* (Bombay: Vora and Co., 1978).

the answer to moving India away from its "degenerate state." This belief resulted in reformers across the spectrum (the Deoband *ulama*, the Aligarh movement, the Arya Samaj and the Brahmo Samaj) encouraging spread of literacy among women, which would give them the ability to read scriptures and become better Muslims and Hindus.[8] Elite men who had never before paid much attention to the happenings in the *zenana*, now began to take active interest in the life within women's quarters.

Men with this new found interest in women's affairs were part of the emerging urban middle class family. The English-educated Indian middle and upper class changed its views on marriage.[9] With men accepting professional jobs that often required them to live away from the extended family, they were removed from the social sphere of patriarchal families. These men turned to their wives for companionship. With rise of companionate marriages, educated men were no longer satisfied with uneducated wives. These men expected their wives to have knowledge of the professional world and provide support in their various endeavors. Formal education and reformist journals worked to equip women with the appropriate skills. Educated women moved away from the ancestral family home to live with their husbands in their civil service postings. The English-educated wife could entertain her husband's European colleagues and advance his professional career. Though English-educated men expected their women to have an adequate knowledge of the colonial world, they also expected women to act as an anchor

[8] Kopf, *The Brahmo Samaj*; Jones, *Arya Dharm*; Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*.

[9] Aparna Basu, "The Reformed Family, Women Reformers: A Case Study of Vidyagauri Nilkanth," *Samya Shakti: A Journal of Women's Studies* IV-V (1989-90): 62-82.

for the family, to ensure that men did not deviate from their community in a society under colonial rule.

Social reform and women's education were part of the modernizing process with male reformers expecting their women to cultivate certain characteristics which were regarded in the reformist sphere as progressive and thus help Indians shed the "degenerate" and "backward" label given by Europeans.[10] The "woman question" was not about what women wanted, but how they could be modernized. Male reformers started schools and produced literature for women with the aim to prepare them for the role they were expected to play in modern society. Besides formal education, journals and magazines were the most common medium used to inculcate middle class values in Indian women.[11] In Gujarat, *Stree Bodh* was the oldest journal catering to women. *Stree Bodh* started in 1850s and over the years many important Gujarati reformers[12] contributed to the journal. Articles aimed to expose women to the wider world and impart knowledge on science, history, geography, biology, zoology and botany. Works of fiction and poetry emphasized middle class values such as modesty, frugality, discipline and freedom from superstitious beliefs. Under Victorian influence, Indian reformers viewed women primarily as mothers and wives. In addition to being loyal and obedient wives, women also needed to be good mothers to their children. Influenced by Napoleon Bonaparte, the Gujarati reformist journal *Stree Bodh* adopted the quote, "The greatness of the country

[10] Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, p. 32-63.

[11] Sonal Shukla, "Cultivating Minds: Nineteenth Century Gujarati Women's Journals," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 26 (October 26, 1991): 63-66; Minault, *Secluded Scholars*; Ibid.

[12] To name a few, Dalpatram, Karsandas Mulji, Dadabhai Naoroji and Behramji Malabari.

depends upon the education the mothers receive," as its motto and printed it on the title page of every publication.[13]

Drawing Inspiration from the Past

Liberal reformers in early and mid-nineteenth century accepted and even encouraged colonial laws that regulated Indian domestic life. Rammohan Roy encouraged the ban on Sati put in place under Lord William Bentinck's Governor-Generalship. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and Behramji Malabari welcomed the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 that legally allowed Hindu widows to remarry. This scenario changed post-1870 when cultural revivalists entered the reformist scene and argued against colonial intervention in the private sphere. The rivalry between people with opposing viewpoints on the role of colonial government was best exemplified by the Age of Consent debates. Liberal reformers such as Malabari and M.G. Ranade urged the colonial government to set a minimum age for consummation within marriage. Meanwhile, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, a cultural revivalist and nationalist, vociferously opposed government intervention in family affairs.

Despite their many differences and their continuous clash during the last decades of the nineteenth century, liberal reformers and cultural revivalists believed in the "golden age" view of history first propagated by Orientalists.[14] Both Rammohan Roy and Dayanand Saraswati argued India was recovering from a dark age. Regeneration of

[13] Shukla, "Cultivating Minds," p. 63.

[14] Jordens, *Dayanand Saraswati*; Jones, *Arya Dharm*; Heimsath, *Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform*; Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance.*

Indian, especially Hindu society, lay in recovering and reviving the classical age of ancient India. Dayanand's cry of "back to the Vedas" and Roy's emphasis on Upanishads and the Vedantic tradition were steps towards rediscovery of the golden age. The golden age idea became even more important in matters relating to women. Ancient upper caste Hindu women were to be emulated by their nineteenth and twentieth century counterparts.[15] Gaorishankar Oza, the Diwan of Bhavnagar, asked nineteenth-century women to model themselves along the lines of educated, virtuous ancient Hindu women. He encouraged people of Bhavnagar to free their daughters from a life of seclusion and ignorance as ancient (upper caste) Hindu society allowed their daughters to be educated.[16]

Hindu reformers had different answers for what caused the decline from the golden age. Some held political upheavals responsible while others traced start of the decline to a time when laws were codified into Manusmriti and other texts.[17] Many Hindu reformers also held Muslim rule responsible for the decline in Hindu society.[18] To strengthen his argument for sending girls to school, Oza described secluding women as a Muslim custom and asked upper caste Hindu families to discontinue it.[19] Hindu reformers believed in the triptych view of history put forward by Orientalists; the ancient Hindu period of the golden age, the medieval Muslim period of darkness, and the modern British period which would uplift Indians from their backward state. Alexander Forbes's

---

[15] Chakravarti, "Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi? Orientalism, Nationalism and a Script for the Past," in *Recasting Women*, ed. Sangari and Vaid, p. 27-87.

[16] K.V. Mehta, *Gaurishankar Udaishankar Oza*, p. 306; Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, p. 63.

[17] Heimsath, *Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform*, p. 114-15.

[18] Chandra, *Oppressive Present*, p. 152; Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, p. 16.

[19] K.V. Mehta, *Gaurishankar Udaishankar Oza,* p. 306.

Ras Mala published in 1856 consisted of four parts, the Hindu dynasties, the Muslim rulers, the Marathas and the British, and the final section describing the peoples and customs of Gujarat.

While comfortable with a classical pan-Indian idea of a golden age, reformers also stressed for regional reformation along linguistic lines. When it came to regeneration of Gujarati society, Narmad, Dalpatram, and Govardhanram Tripathi played an integral role in their capacity as poets, novelists, and stylists of the Gujarati language. All three gave importance to Gujarati classical literature defined as works by *bhakti* poets and Jain literature in Sanskrit, Prakrit, and old Gujarati.[20] Though Persian literature patronized by Muslim courts was ignored, Gujarati historians did have ample praise for Muslim rulers. The late nineteenth-century Gujarati intellectuals living in Ahmedabad were aware of the fact that their beloved city prospered under Muslim rule. In fact it was not the Gujarat sultans or the Mughals, but rather the Marathas who were regarded as plunderers and harbingers of the dark ages. Gujarati Hindus saw Muslim rule as a time of economic development, but cultural decline. They argued that while the city of Ahmedabad prospered under Muslim patronage, Brahmanical culture declined. Some histories of Gujarat focused more on its prosperity while others emphasized cultural decline.

The idea of *Gujaratni asmita* (Gujarati identity) developed in the second half of the nineteenth century and is intricately linked to regional history and linguistic affiliations. Towards the goal of propagating *Gujaratni asmita*, Ranjitram Vavabhai

[20] Riho Isaka, "Gujarati Intellectuals and History Writing in the Colonial Period," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37 (November 30, 2002): 4867-72.

Mehta started the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad in 1905.[21] The organization's goal was to recover and revive the history, literature, and culture of Gujarat. Bhagvatsinh was influenced by the work of pan-Indian and Gujarati reformers as we will see later in the chapter.

In this revival of Gujarati society women would play an integral role. While studying at Elphinstone College, the Gujarati novelist Govardhanram Tripathi, had the following to say about women: "Women are the very source of human happiness, one of the principal means of the improvement of society, the centre of our domestic bliss and the easy delight of the human heart."[22] Govardhanram identifies women as the "principal" means for reforming society. For reformers, both Hindu and Muslim, the "backward" status of women symbolized the degenerate state of religion.[23] However, women also symbolized all that was worth preserving and embodied qualities essential for revival. In the male reformist mind, uplifting women from the state of ignorance was a pre-requisite for reinstating the golden age. Reformers treated women as victims to be rescued or as backward peoples who needed to be uplifted.

Desire for regeneration of ancient Indian culture led to the rise of Vedic Hinduism among Hindu reformers. Starting with Ram Mohan Roy and the Brahmo Samaj, Hindu reformers promoted Vedantic Hinduism as the truest form of religion. Dayanand Saraswati believed in the infallibility of the Vedas. Gujarati reformers, inspired by the

---

[21] Chandra, *Oppressive Present*, p. 152-53. Founders of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad were inspired by the Banga Sahitya Parishad, the Tamil Literary Academy and the Nagari Pracharini Sabha already in existence.

[22] Chandra, *Oppressive Present,* p. 75.

[23] Minault, *Secluded Scholars*, p. 6

pan-Indian climate, responded to local needs. One of the earliest social reformist organization established in Gujarat was the Manav Dharma Sabha started by Durgaram Manchharam Dave in Surat in 1844. It aimed to remove caste differences, encourage widow remarriage, and end idol worship. In 1871, Bholanath Sarabhai, Mahipatram Ruparam Nilkanth, and Lalshankar Umiashankar started the Prarthna Samaj modeled along the Brahmo Samaj of Bengal. With its emphasis on monotheism and congregational worship, Prarthna Samaj was too removed from mainstream society and its teachings did not take root.[24] Reformers in Gujarat were similar to their counterparts in other parts of India in their reverence for scriptural religion and rejection of popular practices. Behramji Malabari, a leading reformer in nineteenth century, spoke favorably of the Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj. He admired Vedic Hinduism and did not have a positive opinion of the Vaishnav sects of Gujarat or the *bhakti* tradition.[25] He praised Karsandas Mulji for taking on the Vaishnav Maharaj in the famous Maharaj Libel case.

Karsandas Mulji along with poet Narmad[26] accused Vaishnav Maharajas of sexual misconduct and corruption in their journal *Satyaprakash*. Jadunath Maharaj, one of the Vaishnav Maharajas, filed a libel suit against Karsandas in Bombay. The trial that became known as the Maharaj Libel case commenced in January 1862. For the first time the newly educated elite of Bombay had challenged on legal terms the guardians of the Pushtimargi sect of the Vallabhacharya Sampradaya. The trial was in essence a conflict

[24] Gillion, *Ahmedabad*, 64-66.

[25] Malabari, *Gujarat and the Gujaratis*, p. 204.

[26] Narmad is credited with articulating a modern Gujarati identity through his writings. In an essay written in 1869 Narmad explained the degeneration of Gujarati society over the years. *Gujaratni Sthiti* (State of Gujarat) was an attempt to inspire Gujaratis to reform their society.

between orthodox Hindus and social reformers on what constituted true religion.[27] Both sides used Hindu Shastras and Vaishnav texts to make their case. Karsandas was supported by his fellow Elphinstone College educated Gujaratis and Maharashtrians. The Supreme Court of Bombay dismissed Jadunath's charge of libel against Karsandas, making the reformer famous across India.

Besides a debate over what constituted true Vallabha practices, the case also brought forward Narmad and Karsandas's views regarding the proper behavior of Pushtimargi women.[28] Both the Pushtimargis and reformers attempted to control female sexuality. Instead of devoting themselves to the Vaishnav Maharajas, reformers asked women to be devoted wives. Amorous women of the Pushtimargi tradition were depicted by reformers as virtuous house-wives whose sexuality was controlled by their husbands or fathers. Discomfort with female sexuality was a trait shared by many reformers. Karsandas criticized the exhibition of sexual behavior during Hindu festivals such as Holi.[29] Bringing women under firm control of men in their family by eliminating outside forms of authority such as religious leaders was a key aspect of the reformist project.

In order to promote the rigid middle class moral code, middle and upper class women were also separated from their working class counterparts. Bhadralok families in Calcutta discouraged their women from participating in popular cultural practices such as

---

[27] Using the Maharaj Libel case, Amrita Shoddhan has examined the role of the colonial state in shaping and defining communities. Amrita Shoddhan, *A Question of Community: Religious Groups and Colonial Law* (Calcutta: Samya, 2001).

[28] Usha Thakkar, "Puppets on the Periphery: Women and Social Reform in Nineteenth Century Gujarat," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 32:1-2 (Jan 4-11, 1997): 46-52; Amrita Shoddhan, "Women in the Maharaj Libel Case: A Reexamination," *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 4:2 (1997): 123-39.

[29] Raval, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in Gujarat*, p. 82.

festivals and community singing and dancing.[30] Bhadralok men regarded the female cultural sphere as vulgar and licentious. Educated women had a better understanding of the colonial world to which their men belonged. They had access to reformist literature and thus greater exposure to the outside world than their predecessors. But, as middle and upper class women became closer to their men in companionate marriages, the separate culture of women declined. With the rise of middle class reformed families, existing differences between women of different classes and castes solidified.

Despite heavy emphasis on the plight of women and ways to improve their miserable conditions, reformist movements during the nineteenth century were dominated by men. Female voices were either absent or silenced in reformist debates.[31] Women were the grounds on which the reformers, the orthodoxy, and the colonial state debated what constituted authentic Indian tradition.[32] Male reformers engaged in public debates with the conservative elements over what should be the position of women in Indian society. Meanwhile women remained silent as it was their job to be reformed, but not act as reformers. Though women did not actively participate in reformist activities until late nineteenth century, they did influence male reformers. These men were often influenced

---

[30] Sumanta Banerjee, "Marginalization of Women's Popular Culture in Nineteenth Century Bengal," in *Recasting Women*, ed. Sangari and Vaid, p. 128-79.

[31] Tarabai Shinde belonged to a family active in Satyashodhak Samaj, founded by the Maratha reformer Jyotirao Phule. In *A Comparison Between Women and Men (Stri-purusha-tulana)* written in Marathi and published in 1882, Shinde held Maratha men responsible for ignoring the plight of women while attacking Brahman dominance over Marathas. She equated the oppressive relationships between upper and lower castes to that between men and women. Shinde was ignored by Maratha men active in the non-Brahman movement who concentrated on improving the status of Maratha men but ignored women. Rosalind O'Hanlon, *A Comparison Between Women and Men: Tarabai Shinde and the Critique of Gender Relations in Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[32] Lata Mani, "Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India," in *Recasting Women*, ed. Sangari and Vaid, p. 88-126.

by strong maternal figures in their life.[33] While formulating the ideal woman, men tended to gain influence from the maternal figures in their lives, and from these real women, reformers envisioned their ideal female companion. Thus, female voices were not completely silent; women influenced the world outside the *zenana* through the power they exercised over men in their lives.

These middle class reformist views, a mixture of upper caste Hindu and Victorian morality, travelled from Calcutta, Ahmedabad and Bombay to princely states. Men from British Gujarat worked in princely territories and vice-versa thus spreading reformist ideas across political boundaries. These literate men, products of colonial education and fluent in multiple languages were responsible for the transmission of social reformist ideals in the Bombay Presidency. Diwans of princely states also played a key role in reformist circles.[34] The princely states shared a porous border with British India that allowed for the transfer of people and ideas. Flexible boundaries resulted in Saurashtra becoming a region where much like the rest of India, local culture blended with Western ideas of reform and progress. Bhagvatsinh of Gondal emerged from such an environment.

The Women of Gondal: Monghiba and Bonjiba

Examination of educational policy of Gondal state highlights mixing of modern and traditional ideas. Bhagvatsinh was influenced by Rajkumar College's liberal

[33] Minault, *Secluded Scholars*, p. 14-57.

[34] Raval, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in Gujarat*, p. 169-78. One such Diwan active in reformist circles was Karamchand Gandhi, father of Mohandas Gandhi. I have already talked about Gaorishankar Oza of Bhavnagar in previous chapters.

education and Indian reformers. Like his contemporaries, Bhagvatsinh believed women were central to the reformist project. In order to bring back the golden age, Indian women needed to be uplifted to the level of women in ancient times. Women of Gondal's royal family were not silent observers of Bhagvatsinh's reformist project. In their capacity as *rani* (queen), *rajkumari* (princess), mother, wife, and daughters, they played an instrumental role shaping Gondal's educational policy.

In matters of female education, Bhagvatsinh was following in the footsteps of his mother. Monghiba started the first girls' school in 1858, a year after Gaorishankar Oza started a similar school in Bhavnagar. Under the influence of Swaminarayan saints, Monghiba developed a positive view towards female education, differing from other Rajput women of her times.[35] She believed that education should not be the exclusive privilege of men. Women too needed to be learned so they could effectively discharge their duties as mothers and wives. Following her husband's death, Monghiba dealt with the British while her son was a minor.[36] Her relations with the Kathiawar Agency were often contentious as she struggled to limit the British political agent's control over young Bhagvatsinh. More often than not she had to submit to the political agent's will, as is evident in the years Bhagvatsinh spent at the Rajkumar College despite Monghiba's initial objections. She was also not in favor of Bhagvatsinh's trip to Europe, but once again lost to the colonial power.[37] Monghiba's personal experiences in political affairs played a role in shaping her views regarding female education. She learnt that often being

---

[35] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 20-21.
[36] See chapter 3 for Gondal state's administration while Bhagvatsinh was a minor.
[37] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 26-27.

a mother meant one had to venture out of the safety of the female sphere into the male world of politics to ensure her son's political future. Women could not afford to remain uneducated as they needed to learn crucial skills to prepare them for motherhood. With this attitude, Monghiba continued to support the vernacular girls' school throughout her life.

After Monghiba's death, Bonjiba, Bhagvatsinh's widowed sister-in-law, became the main patron of the girls' school now named after Monghiba.[38] This was a time when there still was considerable opposition to girls' schools. Male education was accepted among middle class families as it was a stepping stone towards administrative and professional jobs. The prevailing argument in nineteenth century in favor of modern education for Indian men was the financial benefits. Education for middle and upper class women was regarded as superfluous since they were not required to contribute to the family economy. Additionally, opponents of female education believed that educating a woman was such a great sin (*pap*) that bad *karma* would befall on anyone partaking in such an activity, even leading to the woman in question becoming a widow at an early age, widowhood being the greatest calamity for women in a deeply patriarchal society. In such an environment, upper class women publicly declaring their support for female education had a positive impact. In 1893, Bonjiba set up a trust from an initial donation

[38] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal,* p. 228; Administration Reports of Gondal State, various years.

which would distribute annual prizes to deserving female students in an effort to encourage female education.[39]

Bonjiba's life as a widow made her realize the importance of education for girls, to provide them with tools to deal with hardships. Bonjia's widowhood made her more in tune to the life of other widows. As an aristocrat, despite her status as a widow, Bonjiba led a materially comfortable life, as is evident from the various organizations she patronized. But, she was sensitive to her middle class sisters who did not have similar material resources. Support for female education rose from her acknowledgement of the reality that in absence of men, women often had to provide for the family. Thus, women could not be barred from schools on the basis that educating them had no financial payback. Encouraging widows to become teachers was also a way to give widowed women a purpose in life since they no longer enjoyed the higher status reserved for married women in Hindu society.[40] In some ways this mindset was similar to the one espoused by Sahajanand, the founder of Swaminarayan Hinduism, who allowed widows to join his group of male ascetics.[41] Under the influence of Sahajanand's teachings, after all Gondal has one of the oldest Swaminarayan temples, the Monghiba Girls' School

[39] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1893-94.

[40] Schools in other parts of India also encouraged widows to enroll. With increasing demand for an education among the upwardly mobile there was a need for qualified teachers. Educated widows could fulfill societal need and at the same time support themselves. Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, p. 32-63.

[41] To give widows a purpose in life Sahajanand allowed those who wanted to live as ascetics to become his disciples. While formal initiation into asceticism was limited to men, female ascetics (unlike lay women) were allowed in the company of male ascetics provided they kept a physical distance.

welcomed widows from its earliest days and encouraged them to become teachers on completing their education.[42]

Supporting Female Education: An Act of *Seva*

In addition to the Monghiba school, Monghiba, Bonjiba, and Nandkunvarba (Bhagvatsinh's wife) patronized various other institutions from their private accounts. Monghiba, as a follower of Swaminarayan, donated money to the sect's temple in Gondal and frequently gave alms to holy men of various faiths. Bonjiba started an asylum for mentally and physically handicapped people, which was supported by her and the state. Nandkunvarba started the Bhagvatsinhji Orphanage which was supported exclusively from her private purse.[43] During the famine of 1897-1901, Bonjiba and Nandkunvarba donated to Hindu *mahajans* and Muslim *jamats* who were organizing relief efforts. Dhoraji, the principal city of Gondal state and home to the prosperous Muslim mercantile community, started the Nandkunvarba Zenana hospital for women to show their appreciation for the queen's generosity towards *madrasas* and hospitals in the city.[44] As

[42] Major W.M.P. Wood, Political Agent in Adm Report of Gondal State, 1913-1914. On his visit to Gondal Wood visited the Monghiba Girls' High School. He was impressed with the facilities, teachers and students. He made special reference to the presence of three widows who were pursuing an education at Monghiba with the goal to become teachers. He also commented on five students who continued their education after marriage. Gondal state's efforts in encouraging widows to seek education were making a mark.

[43] Orphans until the age of eight could stay at the Bhagvatsinhji orphanage. The asylum accepted orphans from all castes and communities – Kunbis, Muslims, Ahir, Koli, Khant, Khavas, Kadia, Sadhu, Brahman, and Bharwad. A few of the orphans were from neighboring states but most were from Gondal. Adm Report of Gondal State, 1909-10.

[44] Bhagvatsinh opened the Nandkunvarba Zenana Hospital at a meeting held in the Pothiavala Jamat Khana. Tarmahomed Abdulgani Navivala, Secretary of the Hospital Committee, explained the hospital would be open to all women needing medical attention irrespective of their caste and creed. Adm Report of Gondal State, 1915-16; Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 258-72.

per Rajput tradition, these women patronized various charitable causes. It was their political as well as religious duty to aid those in need. Sultan Jahan, the Begam of Bhopal, was another royal who addressed multiple audiences and assumed different roles. The Begum navigated being a woman, a Muslim, and a prince.[45] Similar to the women of Gondal, Sultan Jahan patronized all of her subjects, irrespective of their religion.

All the above mentioned donations by the women of Gondal were sanctioned by religion as acts of *seva* (service). The idea was to not just help the poor and needy but to also accumulate good *karma* while doing so. Where they differed from their ancestors was in the sponsorship of educational institutions. This was a result of the nineteenth-century reformist climate. While the colonial state praised these women for their philanthropic activities, the British government viewed philanthropy as a secular activity. Indian elites on the other hand regarded supporting educational institutions as an extension of their political and religious duties. The religious and the secular were intertwined for these women. In the nineteenth century, education became another arena in which one could perform *seva*. Not educated in western schools, Nandkunvarba, Monghiba, and Bonjiba did not see any distinction between patronizing orphanages, hospitals, temples and schools. All these institutions provided service beneficial to society hence it was one's duty to support them.

State policy reflected Bhagvatsinh's views providing every form of support to educational institutions. When Leilaba, Bhagvatsinh's daughter got married, he started the Leilaba scholarship for any student of Monghiba Girls' School who wanted to pursue

[45] Lambert-Hurley, *Muslim Women, Reform and Princely Patronage.*

college education.[46] This was a marked change from previous years as rulers much like merchants preferred to donate to places of worship, orphanages and hospitals. It was common for upper class families to commemorate joyous occasions such as birth of a child or marriage by sharing some of their wealth with the less fortunate. Schools were unlikely recipients of princely or mercantile philanthropy. But with reformist influence this mindset changed and Indian elites began to consider donating to schools as a form of *seva* equivalent to or even greater than religious service.

In 1913, the Monghiba school was converted into a high school giving birth to the Monghiba Girls' High School, the first girls' high school in all of Saurashtra.[47] A decade earlier English language had been added to the curriculum. Students graduating from Monghiba High School appeared for Bombay University's matriculation exam. In its first year Manibai B. Udani, a Vania girl, passed the exam for which she achieved the Bhagvatsinh Silver Jubilee prize.[48] She went on to join the staff of the Monghiba school as a teacher. Manibai faced opposition from orthodox sections of the Gondal community for pursuing a higher education. Her refusal to bow before the conservative elements was well remembered among reformist circles, earning her the status of a role model for students at Monghiba and other schools in the state. Leilaba, Bhagvatsinh's daughter,

[46] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1919-20.

[47] Monghiba Girls' High School attracted many visitors over the years, including British officials, neighboring princes, and reformers such as Lady Vithaldas Thackersey who were impressed by the school's performance. Sir Vithaldas Thackersey was a prominent Gujarati philanthropist and financier of the SNDT University (named after his mother), the first Indian women's university.

[48] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1913-14.

congratulated Manibai on her achievement and encouraged other girls to follow in her footsteps.[49]

Leilaba and her sister Bakuverba were former pupils of Monghiba Girls' School. Educated in India and England, the sisters would frequently visit their alma mater in Gondal and share their worldly experiences with the young girls. When the high school started a science laboratory to teach elementary physics, chemistry and physiology, Bakuverba attended the opening ceremony.[50] In similar vein as rest of the family, the two sisters worked to promote education, especially female education, in Gondal state. Needless to say neither Leilaba nor Bakuvarba observed *purdah* (veling or seclusion) in any form. In this they benefited from the radical steps taken by their mother.

The royal family hoped the decision by their women to not observe *purdah* would be emulated by the rest of society. Bhagvatsinh and Nandkunvarba sent their sons as well as daughters to study in boarding schools in England and Scotland. They wanted their educated daughters to serve as examples to the women of Gondal. Despite all these efforts, people of Gondal were slow to accept change. Enrollment in girls' schools was lower than expected. Bhagvatsinh came to the conclusion that the only way to get people to send their daughters to school was to use compulsion. Baroda had made primary education compulsory for boys and girls in 1907. Gondal made primary education for girls compulsory in 1917.[51]

---

[49] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1913-14.
[50] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1915-16
[51] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 340-42.

Many wondered why Bhagvatsinh did not make primary education compulsory for boys too. Why the sole focus on girls? The state explained that there were multiple factors that led to such a decision. Foremost was the discrepancy in literacy levels between boys and girls leading to men having uneducated wives. Intellectual inequality between husbands and wives could result in an unstable marriage. Thus, it was important to establish parity between couples by providing educated men with educated wives.[52] In this Bhagvatsinh and Nandkunvarba's thinking was similar to reformers across India. Push for formal education came from the upwardly mobile for whom formal schooling was the means to adjust to the modern world. Education for women was a part of the modernization process.

Another reason for focusing on girls was to prepare them for motherhood. An educated woman would pass on her learning to her children.[53] Educating a girl meant educating the whole family, thus making female education a worthy investment for the state and society at large. This second reason was an outcome of society treating women as nurturers and caregivers, as those in charge of the domestic sphere. In a colonial society it was their job that the family did not go astray. Women were the guardians of tradition in a rapidly modernizing world. Since primary education was made compulsory in 1917, the number of school going girls increased by 400% in one year.[54] Rapid increase in enrollment was a cause for celebration since educated girls would become better wives and mothers.

---

[52] Ibid., p. 339-40.
[53] *Her Highness Nandkuverba, C.I., Rani Saheb, Gondal* (Rajkot, date unknown), p. 8.
[54] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 343.

Her Highness Maharani Nandkunvarba, CI
Queen of Gondal State

Figure 5.1 Adapted from *The King and Queen in India* (Bombay: Bennett, Coleman & Co., 1912).

Good Wives, Good Mothers

Nandkunvarba (1867-1936) married Bhagvatsinh in 1882 when she was fifteen years old. Raised in a conservative household and given a primary education, she quickly assimilated to her husband's reformist views on coming to Gondal. Within six years of their marriage Nandkunvarba stopped observing *purdah* and attended public events. She was the first Rajput women in Saurashtra to step out of purdah.[55] Nandkunvarba frequented schools to show her support for education and patronized various charitable causes. Since Nandkunvarba and Bhagvatsinh married at a young age their personalities developed in tandem. From the early days of their marriage, under Bhagvatsinh's influence, Nandkunvarba molded herself as a reformer. She credited her husband for convincing her to come out of seclusion. Wanting to "keep up" with her husband and travel unrestrained in his company, Nandkunvarba discarded *purdah*.[56] This resulted in her first of many trips to England in 1890, also the first time she left Saurashtra. Two years later she took a world tour with Bhagvatsinh and visited Europe, America, Japan, China, Australia and Sri Lanka.[57] This was unusual behavior for a Rajput woman since most lived in seclusion. Using her position as the queen she encouraged other women to discard the practice of *purdah*.[58]

Though Nandkunvarba took a radical step by stepping out of seclusion, she attributes her decision to wifely devotion. She saw herself as being a *pativrata* woman

---

[55] Allen and Dwivedi, *Lives of the Indian Princes*, p. 90
[56] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 8; *Highness Nandkuverba,* p. 5.
[57] *Highness Nandkuverba,* p. 7.
[58] *Times of India*, December 1888 and February 1890.

following Hindu tradition and not a radical. Nandkunvarba like many Hindu reformers viewed *purdah* as a custom introduced by Muslims. Nandkunvarba stated, since ancient Indian women did not observe *purdah* she saw no need to do so. She describes her decision to stop living in seclusion as re-instating the past and not as a break from tradition. In writings about Nandkunvarba she is celebrated as a woman who achieved many "firsts."[59] She was one of the first Rajput woman to leave *purdah* and travel to England. In 1892, the Queen conferred on her membership of the Imperial Order of the Crown of India (CI). Not only did she go on a world tour with her husband, but she also published her travel diary entitled *Gomandala Parikrama* (A tour around the world). Right next to such descriptions of Nandkunvarba as a trail blazer are comments about her love for Puranic literature, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and household management. Despite some of her unconventional behavior, the Gondal state took pains to paint a picture of Nandkunvarba as a traditional queen and a good Hindu woman.[60] Her path breaking behavior while valorized is explained as simply mimicking the lifestyle of ancient Indian women. Nandkunvarba would say that her globe-trotting, to be a constant companion to her husband, as her reading of religious epics constituted a lifestyle that was more Indian and more Hindu than that of her contemporaries living a cloistered life in the *zenana*.

---

[59] *A Review of 25 Years' Administration of Gondal State* (Bombay: The Times Press), p. 38-39; *Highness Nandkuverba*, p. 6-7; Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 238-43; Adm Reports of Gondal State, various years.

[60] *Highness Nandkuverba*, p. 5, 7-8.

In writings about Gondal, all written by men, Bhagvatsinh is depicted as the sole reason for Nandkunvarba's radical lifestyle.[61] No attention is paid to the other ladies of the Gondal family, especially Monghiba, who was alive when Nandkunvarba stopped observing *purdah*. It is hard to imagine the new queen at the age of twenty leaving the *zenana* without her mother-in-law's support.[62] The reformist Monghiba who patronized female education because it prepared women to become better mothers and wives surely saw the merit in her daughter-in-law sharing her son's reformist outlook as it would only strengthen their marriage. It is safe to say Bhagvatsinh was not the only influence on the young queen. Unfortunately we don't have any writings by or about Monghiba. All writings on Gondal tend to focus on Bhagvatsinh and trace all decisions to the king. This is fitting with the image of kingly hierarchy, but as historically has been the case, women (and men) of the immediate family are never silent. It is a shame we don't have more information about the mother of such a beloved king, especially since she was his only parent from a young age.

Nandkunvarba's decision to adapt with time came from a desire to be her husband's partner in all his endeavors. Though an aristocrat she had a middle class understanding of companionate marriage; a relationship where husband and wife were partners and supported each other. While giving a speech on the merits of female education Nandkunvarba stated:

---

[61] In *Maker of Modern Gondal*, Singh gives all the credit to Bhagvatsinh for Nandkunvarba's liberal outlook on life. Singh paints the picture of an enlightened man encouraging his young wife to cultivate herself through exposure to appropriate influences.

[62] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 156.

> *Education is a great ornament to our class. It is a more valuable and beautiful possession than jewels and rich clothing……Men and women may be variously mis-mated, some in age, some in disposition; but those who are mis-mated in education are the worst-mated of all, and are more unhappy than any of the others…… Where the mother is educated, there the children are better trained.*[63]

For Nandkunvarba the primary purpose of female education was to shape women to become compatible companions for their educated husbands. Middle class men in Saurashtra were similar to their counterparts in other parts of India in their desire for educated wives. She recognized the need for wives to have comparable education to their husbands, otherwise the marriage could be unhappy. The primary reason behind educating women was to build a stable family, a stable community. Education would turn women into more suitable wives and effective mothers, thereby strengthening society. Promotion of female education was a means to adapt to modernity, to adjust to the new socio-political climate that required middle and upper class men to have received formal schooling. As expected of a queen, Nandkunvarba took a leadership role in furthering state policies. Being a dutiful wife she supported her husband's reformist policies. By promoting female education, Nandkunvarba was fulfilling her duties as a wife as well as the queen.

Nandkunvarba believed in separate spheres for men and women and cautioned Indian women against blindly following their western counterparts. She did not approve

[63] *Highness Nandkuverba*, p. 8.

of the "new woman" of Britain who had acquired "masculine spirits."[64] Nandkunvarba had strict views on the appropriate roles for men and women, roles that were not interchangeable. In 1888, in a speech before students of the Barton Female Training College[65] at Rajkot, Nandkunvarba stressed the important differences between men and women.

> *You must remember that the provinces of males and females are quite distinct, and consequently the ways of educating the two must necessarily differ. There may be some points in common. But the most important part of our education lies in creating good, obedient wives, devoted to their husbands in both prosperity and adversity. The good wives will prove good mothers and will be impressed with the duty of bringing up their children carefully…..Neatness also forms a part of female education. In this as well as in other civilized countries a clean and tidy house reflects no small credit on the house-wife…..Attention to household matters tends not only to the savings of money but also gives excellent physical exercise to the women of this country. I do not advocate females neglecting the duties in their proper sphere, and, for want of such exercise, taking to manly sports, as is done in some of the countries of Europe.*[66]

Indian women were not to mimic their western counterparts but to look within Indian culture for role models. Nandkunvarba constantly used Sita from the Ramayana as an

---

[64] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, 239.

[65] The Barton Female Training College was set up in 1885 to train female teachers for schools in Saurashtra. Various princely states of Saurashtra contributed to the trust that ran the Barton College. *Manual of Karbharis' Meeting of Kathiawar States*, p. 89-91.

[66] *Highness Nandkuverba*, p. 9, 10.

exemplar of wifely devotion, virtuous behavior and purity. She encouraged women to model themselves in Sita's image and become good, obedient wives. While excellence in sports was crucial to public school education for boys in Britain and India, Nandkunvarba cautioned against using the same model for girls. The female sex did not need (manly) sports for exercise as they had (feminine) housework to keep them healthy.

Much like her views on companionate marriage, Nandkunvarba's description of a woman's domestic duties was middle class. This is surprising behavior from an aristocratic woman. Since when did frugality, neatness and attention to household matters become a virtue among aristocrats? Nandkunvarba's views show the influence of middle class reformers on Indian aristocrats. Both Indian middle class reformers as well as imperial voices often criticized Indian aristocrats for their wasteful spending, their inattention to lives of their subjects, and their unwillingness to change with time. Princely states are often depicted as being isolated from colonial India, their rulers not keeping pace with the advent of modernity. Gondal, Bhavnagar, Mysore and Baroda show us a considerable number of princes were aware of the socio-political climate beyond their state boundaries and enacted policies accordingly. In the field of social reform, there was cooperation between aristocrats and middle class social reformers. In chapters 2 and 3 we saw the partnership that existed between the middle class Diwan of Bhavnagar and the royal family when it came to education. Here we see that not only did princes support middle class reformers, they also adopted their values. Nandkunvarba's definition of a good wife and mother was similar to what middle class reformers across India were using. While in political matters there might have been a disconnect between the middle

class and the aristocrats as witnessed by the hostile relationship between nationalists and princes, in social matters the two supported each other's agenda. Many princes were sympathetic to middle class desires for modernity and supported such efforts in their own states as well as outside.[67] Though the middle class depended on aristocrats and upper class merchants as patrons for their reformist causes, they maintained considerable intellectual independence. Instead of donors shaping the reformist message, the reverse happened with the monied groups adopting, or at least promoting middle class values.

Bhagvatsinh – A Liberal Reformer and a Cultural Revivalist

Bhagvatsinh shared his wife's middle class reformist views. Since an early age he believed the institution of *purdah* was responsible for the "backward" state of Indian women. He held Muslim rulers responsible for introducing this custom and argued that women in ancient India traveled unveiled. Like his contemporaries he held ancient India as a model to be followed and showed a preference for Vedic Hinduism. Modern India would be shaped on this imagined idea of an ancient India where women were educated. He did not want Indian women to view British women as role models. Bhagvatsinh like Nandkunvarba disproved of the masculine behavior of many western women with their penchant for sports. Since Indian women already held considerable authority over domestic matters and played a crucial role in religious ceremonies, the only thing to change was lack of education.[68] Women were to learn Sanskrit, Gujarati, and elementary

[67] Sen, *Migrant Races*, p. 24-25.
[68] *Journal of a Visit to England in 1883*, p. 171-172.

arithmetic. In addition they would be taught how to be good managers of their household. They would receive training that would help them to become good wives and mothers. This is in marked contrast to his views on education for boys. Bhagvatsinh was a liberal reformer when it came to boy's education but turned into a cultural revivalist on the topic of female education.

Bhagvatsinh believed modern science should receive the highest priority among all subjects in boys' schools.[69] With such a thought in mind he studied medicine at Edinburgh University. For Bhagvatsinh, knowledge of science and technology was the key to the future. He built technical schools across Gondal state and provided scholarships for boys who wanted to pursue higher education at medical and engineering colleges in India and England.[70] At a speech made at Sagramji Boys' High School in Gondal in 1889, Bhagvatsinh explained his views on education:

> *For a scholarly and accurate knowledge of the vernacular the study of Sanskrit is indispensable. Sanskrit may also be learnt for its own sake, for its literature and many archaeological and metaphysical researches. But the study of various modern sciences is, I should say, our greatest want at the present moment – a want which can only be supplied by learning English. In her superiority in scientific knowledge lies the key to England's greatness…..Looking to the present*

[69] In giving importance to science Bhagvatsinh was not alone. As seen in chapter 2, the reformist poet Dalpatram advocated industrialization of India as early as 1851.

[70] In 1904, Bhagvatsinh offered Jamshedji Tata 300 acres of land in Gondal to build the Tata Indian Institute of Research. Offer also included a Rs. 5,00,000 contribution towards the building fund and an annual grant of Rs. 35,000. Tata found Gondal too remote a location and declined the offer, instead choosing to locate the Institute in the princely state of Mysore. Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 250; *Review of 25 Years Administration of Gondal State*, p. 21; Bhagavan, *Sovereign Spheres*, p. 69.

condition of our country, a boy's education will necessarily remain incomplete without a good acquaintance with English.[71]

Bhagvatsinh publicly declared, without hesitation, the importance of English and modern science over Sanskrit. Boys needed to learn English as it was the language of science and India needed to master scientific knowledge in order to reach England's greatness. Here we have Bhagvatsinh exhibiting an evolutionary view of Indian civilization, a linear notion of progress. He subscribed to the Utilitarian idea that India was behind England and needed to catch up by learning modern science. The future of India lay not in duplicating ancient Indian society but in using England as a model.

The progressive, evolutionary view of history only applied to scientific matters, the male arena. When shaping educational policy for boys of Gondal, Bhagvatsinh turned to ideals of Enlightenment, Utilitarianism and nineteenth-century liberalism. Thus schools for boys were modeled along the lines of British public schools. This was true for both the Sagramji Boys High School and the Grasia College.[72] And it was definitely the case when it came to princely schools such as Mayo College and Rajkumar College, the latter being Bhagvatsinh's alma mater. For Bhagvatsinh, the colonial environment necessitated a Western education for men. While he wasn't opposed to boys learning Indian classical or vernacular languages, they were secondary to English. The two crucial subjects for Gondal boys were the English language and modern science.

---

[71] Bhagvat Sinhjee, *Spirit of Service,* p. 5-6 (Part II).

[72] Adm Reports of Gondal State, various years.

Emphasis on Western education is especially striking since the person in charge is a prince. He is not a member of an upwardly mobile caste who is seeking employment in the colonial environment to achieve higher status. Nor is he a descendent of the traditional class of government administrators who switched from Persian to English under British rule. Bhagvatsinh is the ruler of a state whose educational policy emerges from his belief that an educated citizenry would bring stability. He adopted this liberal idea when he started a school for *grasias* as examined in chapter 4. The Sagramji High School named after Bhagvatsinh's father was a continuation of the same philosophy. In addition to creating an enlightened *Grasia* class he also wanted an enlightened upper caste (Brahman and Vania). In his capacity as the ruler he is modeling his future population in a mold that he believes will serve the state's interests.[73]

When it came to female education, Bhagvatsinh refused to use England as a model. Indian men could and should learn from their British counterparts, but Indian women should use ancient Indians as their guide. The need to draw inspiration from Indian's own past when it came to women's education arose out of the belief that women were guardians of tradition. It was their job to preserve their culture and pass it on to the next generation in their capacity as mothers. Bhagvatsinh stated, "It is my firm conviction that if nations are made by men it is women that make men in as much as the foundations

[73] In 1884 when Bhagvatsinh became the ruler 47.6% of state employees were from Gondal. By 1908, the proportion had risen to 84%. This was a direct effect of the state's education system which produced individuals with the skills necessary to become administrators in the twentieth century. Adm Reports of Gondal State, various years.

of character are laid in the nursery."[74] Since the goal of female education was to teach girls to be good wives and mothers, curriculum focused on religious, cultural and historical subjects.

Though girls started off with a different curriculum from boys, as education for girls advanced there was considerable merging of study plans. Once Monghiba Girls' High School took the decision to prepare their students for the Bombay University's matriculation exams, they had no alternative but to introduce "manly" subjects to the curriculum. Since girls were sitting for the same exams as boys, the school had no choice but to train them equally. This development resulted in criticism from certain quarters. *Saurashtra Shikshak*, a journal devoted to education, expressed disapproval over increasing number of high schools for girls whose aim was to prepare their students for Bombay University's matriculation exams. *Saurashtra Shikshak* believed this preparation for an exam took away time and resources from the all-important task of preparing girls for the domestic arena.[75] Vidyagauri Nilkanth and Shardaben Mehta, two sisters who were the first female university graduates from Gujarat, disagreed with proponents of separate education for girls and boys. The sisters argued that since men and women have the same intellect they should receive similar education.[76] By early twentieth century

---

[74] From the address given by Bhagvatsinh to the "daughters of Gondal" on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee celebrations in 1934.

[75] *Saurashtra Shikshak*, 2:1 (August 1928), p. 43-45. The journal was published by the Hunter Male Training College in Rajkot.

[76] Kunjalata Shah, "Gender Perceptions in the Sundari Subodh, the Popular Women's Journal in Gujarati, 1903-1923," in *Visibilising Women: Facets of History through a Gender Lens*, ed. Kirit K. Shah and Radhika Seshan (Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2005), p. 103-113. The edited volume is a collection of papers presented at various seminars organized by the Department of History, SNDT Women's University in Bombay.

there was less uniformity among reformers when it came to women's education. Some, such as writers of *Saurashtra Shikshak,* wanted to prepare girls to become efficient housewives and educated mothers. Others wanted women to also be prepared to lead civic and charitable institutions as it was a natural extension of women's "nurturing" nature.

Bhagvatsinh believed education was a chief factor in the elevation of a nation. Both men and women needed to be educated as both the sexes were required for regeneration. Improving the status of women was essential to the revival of the nation. During the Golden Jubilee celebrations in 1934, Bhagvatsinh had the following to say to Gondal's women, or "daughters of Gondal" as he called them, "If India is to regain her former glory she can do so only by re-instating her daughters in the place they occupied and to which they are entitled."[77] Bhagvatsinh had a cyclical view of history when it came to women's affairs; the goal was to re-instate the past. But when it came to education for men, by continuing in the nineteenth-century liberal tradition, Bhagvatsinh was adopting a linear view of history. Bhagvatsinh was a liberal reformer as well as a cultural revivalist. Not only was there no contradiction in the parallel existence of these two views, but they also complemented each other. Since men and women had different, but equally important, roles to play in society, their training would also be dissimilar. Indian reformers such as Bhagvatsinh came to terms with British imperialism by accepting Western superiority in science and training men for the modern world, while

[77] From the address given by Bhagvatsinh to the "daughters of Gondal" on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee celebrations in 1934.

expecting women to make up for the Westernized Indian man by holding steadfast to tradition.

"Bhaga Bapa" – "Father" of Gondal

Figure 5.2 Maharaja Bhagvatsinh with family and staff. The people of Gondal referred to Bhagvatsinh as the "father" of the state. Above we have Bhagvatsinh with the royal family and staff members, an extended family of sorts.

Courtesy of Navlakha Palace Library

The Reformed Speak Up

With male reformers setting the agenda one wonders how women responded, especially the generation educated in formal schools. How did women respond to their assigned roles as wives and mothers? For the most part they were happy with the status quo. As examined above, Nandkunvarba firmly believed in men and women not infringing on each other's domain. Women limited themselves to civic and charitable causes. For aristocratic women this was a continuation of their traditional duties as female members of the royal family patronized learning, religion, orphanages, hospitals, and other social causes. What changed under reformist influence is the addition of educational institutions and reformist organizations as beneficiaries of royal patronage. While aristocratic women were extending their patronage network, middle class women were breaking away from tradition by expanding their domain from the domestic sphere.

In Ahmedabad, the Hindu Stree Mandal (1903) worked to encourage women's education and provide vocational training. The organization's members were active in relief work during times of famine and natural disasters. Their journal, *Stree-Hitopadesh* (1909), covered the devastating Kutch famine of 1911. The founding members toured Saurashtra and Kutch during the famine of 1911. They collected funds for relief work and distributed food and fodder. Women behind *Stree-Hitopadesh* also covered activities of the Gujarati diaspora such as Gandhian *satyagrahas* in South Africa.[78] Women's journals in the twentieth century were different from their nineteenth century counterparts in that

[78] Shirin Mehta, "Women's Journalism in Gujarati: A Study in Expression of Gender Perception, 1850-1920," in *Visibilising Women*, ed. Shah and Seshan, p. 98-99.

the former had female contributors. In the nineteenth century, women's journals were run almost exclusively by men. Twentieth-century journals also focused more on political and international topics as seen from *Stree-Hitopadesh*'s coverage.

In Surat, Bajigauri Munshi (1866-1926) and Shivagauri Gajjar (also known as Naniben 1871-1945), both widows, started Vanita Vishram in 1907, a home for widowed women.[79] They also started a journal, *Vanita Vigyan*, in 1909. Vanita Vishram encouraged widows to become teachers or learn handicrafts in order to become self-sufficient. Widows living at Vanita Vishram received free education and vocational training. The two women started this endeavor with help from their families who donated a house and provided financial assistance. Munshi came from a Nagar Brahman family with reformist leanings. Gajjar's father (Vaishya Suthar by caste) was a prosperous merchant. Gajjar's brother, a renowned scientist, introduced his sister to the Thackersey family of Bombay. This connection came in handy when the two women relocated Vanita Vishram to a larger property due to its popularity. Vanita Vishram received patronage from the commercial class of Bombay and Surat, including eminent men and women such as Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas, Sir Vitthaldas Damodardas Thackersey, and his mother Shrimati Nathibai Damodardas Thackersey.[80]

Interestingly Gajjar did not believe in widow remarriage. She wanted widows to be educated and self-sufficient, but not remarry. Gajjar was not alone in expressing such a view. Parvatibai, the famous reformer D.K. Karve's sister-in-law, received an education

[79] Makrand Mehta, "Institution Building and Social Change in Western India: A Case Study of Vanita Vishram, Surat, 1907-1920," in *Visibilising Women*, ed. Shah and Seshan, p. 115-22.

[80] SNDT University in Bombay is named after Shrimati Nathibai Damodardas Thackersey.

at Karve's school after she became a widow at the age of twenty. Later on she became a teacher at the Karve school. She was a tonsured widow who spoke publicly against widow remarriage.[81] Gajjar and Parvatibai aimed to help widows develop skills that would make them independent and give them a purpose in life. Though they were radical in their work with widows, both had orthodox beliefs when it came to widow remarriage. This paradox was not that uncommon among Indian reformers. This was a common sentiment shared by many reformers, including Bhagvatsinh who worked to encourage widows to become teachers in girl's schools but was adamantly opposed to widow remarriage.[82]

The women of Gondal who were beneficiaries of state educational policy bestowed upon Bhagvatsinh the title of "valiant champion of female emancipation" and thanked him for introducing compulsory female education in the state.[83] These reformed women of the new generation were grateful to their male reformers. Vidyagauri Joshi, a graduate of Monghiba High School, credited Bhagvatsinh with recognizing from an early age "the woman's cause is man's cause."[84] But these women did not limit themselves to the domestic arena. By 1930s, women from prominent families were present and active at official state functions. They made public speeches at these events in the name of "women of Gondal." Just as English-educated Indian men claimed to represent the rest of the population, the English-educated women appointed themselves as the spokesperson

---

[81] Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, p. 52.

[82] *Journal of a Visit to England in 1883*, p. 174.

[83] *The Bombay Chronicle*, August 27, 1934.

[84] *Gondal's Cherished Treasures: An Account of Shree Bhagvat Sinhjee Golden Jubilee Celebrations* (Gondal: Shree Bhagvat Sinhjee Golden Jubilee Committee, 1934), p. 13.

for all women. They asked for continuing the efforts to spread female education and remove any impediments that prevented girls from going to school, be they cultural or economic in nature. Women spoke out against the evils of *purdah* and praised Bhagvatsinh for providing scholarships to women who wanted to pursue further education outside Gondal state.

Gondal's Educated Women

Figure 5.3 A woman addressing a gathering in front of Bhagvatsinh (sitting on the stage, front row). This picture can be found in books on twentieth-century Gondal as proof of its enlightened women.

Adapted from *Gondal's Cherished Treasures: An Account of Shree Bhagvat Sinhjee Golden Jubilee Celebrations* (Gondal: Shee Bhagvat Sinhjee Golden Jubilee Committee, 1934).

Bhagvatsinh adjusted to the changed social climate and recognized the presence of educated women. He appointed Jamnabai Rathod, the first woman from Saurashtra to receive a B.A. from Bombay University, to the position of secretary in state administration.[85] The mood of these reformed women is captured in a speech made by Godavri Pandya (also a graduate of the Monghiba school) in 1934 during the golden jubilee celebrations of Bhagvatsinh's rule.

> *In an age when the youth challenge the authority of elders, women challenge the authority of men-folk, and the proletariat challenge the authority of those who govern them, out-of-date social customs and ill-founded prejudices will hold no good at all. They are largely to blame for the still-existing absence of uplift in the case of female education in some parts of Kathiawar.*[86]

These are not the words of a submissive woman, but that of one who is aware of the ongoing changes in India as well as other parts of the world. Pandya knew that women in other countries were fighting for equal citizenship and wanted the same for Indian women. While women were grateful to reformers of the previous generation, they did not necessarily hold the same viewpoint. Nandkunvarba might have wanted women to concentrate on their husbands and children, but her daughter's contemporaries were not satisfied being chained to the house. They asked for equal rights in the political arena and charted a path unforeseen by their reformers.

---

[85] Ibid., p. 15
[86] Ibid., p. 19.

Conclusion

Despite generational differences, all reformers agreed the ultimate goal of education was elevation of the nation. In this endeavor both women and men were to play important roles. The older generation wanted women to contribute to the revival through their position as mothers and wives. The new generation expected women to also be involved in the political arena. For Bhagvatsinh, education was a vehicle to build a stable society. The liberal education that he received at Rajkumar College made him a believer in the uplifting power of education. Bhagvatsinh's views on education were influenced by British liberals and Utilitarians of the nineteenth century. His personal experiences also contributed towards his faith in liberal education. Though a ruler of a princely state in the western edge of India, Bhagvatsinh gained recognition at the national and even international level because of his liberal policies. Just as he improved his position in the princely hierarchy by embracing English-education, he expected liberal education to have the same effect on the *Grasias* and other "backward" groups in his state.

Bhagvatsinh's educational policy for girls was similar in spirit to that for the *Grasias*. The goal of liberal education was to develop an enlightened citizenry that would contribute to the stability of the state. He believed that education would bring the "backward" *Grasias* and women out of their ignorant state and turn them into model subjects. Even though reformers focused on women and lower castes, promotion of education was never about those who were to be reformed. Education was a way to adjust to modernity, to the changes brought about by the colonial power. Reformers educated women because they were essential to the revival of the community. Education was not

supposed to benefit women as individuals. From its earliest days the reformist project was paternal in nature with male reformers deciding women's position in society. Bhagvatsinh referred to himself as the senior member of the extended family of Gondal. Residents of Gondal in turn addressed him as "*bapu/bapa*", as the father to all of Gondal's people. Upper caste male control over reformist movements decreased in the twentieth century as educated women and lower castes started asking for the same rights that elite Indian men had been asking from the British. Just as English-educated Indian men carved their own path and challenged imperial power, women started organizations such as AIWC (All India Women's Conference) to ask for equal political rights. Reformers could only control the reformed up to a certain point, beyond which they started using their liberal education to express their own needs and ambitions.

Chapter 6

Enhancing *Abru* by Performing *Seva*: Growing Support for Education among Gujarati Merchants

On his way to England during his first trip in 1883, the Rajput Prince Bhagvatsinh of Gondal stopped in Bombay for a few days. While in Bombay he met with Sheth Adam Pirbhai, a Bohra Muslim native of Dhoraji (Gondal state). Bhagvatsinh was impressed to see the many bungalows owned by Sheth Adam.[1] Being in awe of the success of merchants was a common experience among Princes of India. This was especially true in Saurashtra where mercantile communities played a key societal role. As seen in previous chapters the political establishment needed support from trading castes in promoting radical social reformist projects such as education for women. Diwan Gaorishankar Oza opened the first school for girls in Bhavnagar only after he won support from the city's leading merchants. The Gujarat Vernacular Society of Ahmedabad, a leading reformist organization, depended heavily on financial support from merchants. The GVS started the first girls' school in Ahmedabad only after Harkunvar Shethani, widow of Sheth Hathisinh Kesrisinh, assumed complete financial responsibility for the school. Muslim merchants supported *madrasas* in Dhoraji, Junagadh and other cities of Gujarat. Jain merchants set up funds to assist their co-religionists with educational expenses. The spirit

[1] *Journal of a Visit to England in 1883*, 16th – 27th April, 1883. The honorific title "*sheth*" is used to address a wealthy merchant, or a prominent and well-respected individual, usually belonging to a trading community. In Gujarati, the title "*sheth*" is used across religious lines for Hindus, Muslims, Zoroastrians and Jains.

of philanthropy was shared by all members of the Gujarati business community, irrespective of caste and religion.

This chapter examines the role of commercial communities in the promotion of education in Saurashtra. Gujarati trading castes including members of the diaspora were essential in the formation of a modern Gujarati society. For a merchant, maintaining and enhancing one's *abru* (reputation, credit) was of utmost importance. Since the economic and social worlds of the merchant were intertwined, merchants improved their standing in society by engaging in *seva* (social and religious service). This was not just a pragmatic decision, but also mandated by religion. Hindu, Jain, Muslim and Zoroastrian Gujarati merchants lived by a common ethical code that expected them to support socially important causes.

We will see how reformist causes such as education became socially important in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Initially, merchants supported formal education to cultivate a better relationship with their reformist rulers. Over time trading castes needed formal education in order to survive in the world of modern business. Educational philanthropy became important since it was for the betterment of one's caste or religious community. Even though mercantile philanthropy was community-based, merchants often crossed caste and religious boundaries when making their donations. We will see how merchants donated across political lines by sponsoring charitable institutions in various princely states and British India, highlighting the fluid boundaries between Indian and British-ruled territories.

Interdependence between Rulers and Merchants

Rulers and merchants of Gujarat had a symbiotic relationship where the former provided an environment favorable for trade and the latter helped the state financially.[2] This dynamic existed during the pre-colonial era and continued during princely and colonial rule. In Mughal and Maratha times the princely states of Saurashtra were primarily city-states. States often shared their name with the capital city which was a fortress town. The main job of the king was protection of his territories from external and internal threats. There were some kings who assumed a secondary role of encouraging trade and building their state to become a center for commerce.[3]

Bhavnagar was one such state whose rulers made it a priority to develop trade in its territories. Rulers of Bhavnagar built ports and provided trade concessions to merchants. But a state could only become a commercial center if it was militarily and politically stable. What attracted merchants most was a strong state that could protect their commercial interests. In early eighteenth century, under Bhavsinh I (b. 1683), Bhavnagar became a militarily stronger state thereby attracting traders from other areas of Saurashtra that were facing political upheaval.[4] To escape frequent Maratha raids, merchants from the neighboring ports of Gogha and Cambay migrated to Bhavnagar and asked the king for protection.[5] Having already defeated the Marathas in 1720s, the Rajput Bhavsinh welcomed these men, provided them protection and created a favorable

[2] Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual*, p. 81-94; Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat*; Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat*. Christopher Bayly has made a similar argument regarding northern Indian merchants in *Rulers, Townsmen, and Bazaars*.

[3] Spodek, *Urban-Rural Integration*, p. 11-13.

[4] Amarji, *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, p. 95-98.

[5] Forbes, *Ras Mala,* p. 418.

environment for trade by charging them low export duties.[6] Wakhtsinh (r. 1772-1816), Bhavsinh's grandson, captured the nearby coastal city of Mahuva and developed its port to attract more merchants to his state.[7] By 1789, Bhavnagar port was exporting one-third of Gujarat's cotton.[8] This was possible because the Gohil Rajput rulers of Bhavnagar provided merchants with much desired stability and protection.

The merchant-ruler dynamic that we see in Saurashtra was also true for Mughal Gujarat. Under the protection of Sultan Ahmad Shah, who founded Ahmedabad in 1411, merchants, weavers and skilled craftsmen moved to the city. The city's wealth, dependent on its commercial communities, grew through the fifteenth century. In 1572, Ahmedabad became a part of the Mughal Empire with the walled city serving as the residence of the Mughal governor of Gujarat. The port city of Surat came under the Mughal umbrella in 1573. Gujarat's integration into the Mughal system further boosted trade as it connected the region's merchants to far away markets.[9] Political stability provided by the Mughals protected merchant property at home and goods in transit.

The importance of political stability to merchants becomes even more evident when we compare sixteenth-century Gujarat to eighteenth-century Gujarat. With decline in Mughal power, Ahmedabad and Surat suffered repeated attacks from the Maratha army, severely affecting the city's trade. In 1664, the leading merchant Virji Vorah, a

[6] Spodek, *Urban-Rural Integration,* p. 30.
[7] Forbes, *Ras Mala*, p. 420.
[8] Spodek, *Urban-Rural Integration,* p. 19.
[9] Gillion, *Ahmedabad*, p. 14-15.

Jain, joined hands with Haji Muhammad Zahid Beg, the Muslim *shahbandar*[10] of Surat, to petition the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb to increase protection for Surat against the growing military might of the Marathas.[11] On Aurangzeb's death in 1707 the situation worsened along the Surat-Agra trade route, leaving caravans susceptible to attacks from bandits. With their property no longer secure, Surati merchants stopped using *hundis*[12] for goods bound for Agra. Since the prosperity of Ahmedabad and Surat depended on the stability of the Mughal Empire, their fortunes declined in the first half of the eighteenth century.[13]

As merchants depended on the political power to provide conditions favorable for trade, so kings turned to the commercial communities for financial assistance in times of war as well as peace.[14] The Rajput Wakhatsinh of Bhavnagar bought Talaja port from the Muslim Nawab of Cambay in 1780 with money raised by Bhavnagar's merchants. Under his rule Bhavnagar state gained Mahuva port and land from weakened Kathi chiefs, all military expeditions financed with the aid of his merchants.[15] By end of eighteenth century, Bhavnagar had become one of the most prosperous states in Saurashtra. A few centuries earlier Mughal Gujarat had a similar relationship between its merchants and

---

[10] The *shahbandar* was the "master of the harbor." He was in charge of the port as well as the foreign merchants. He represented the foreign merchants in disputes with city officials.

[11] Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat,* p. 125-28.

[12] *Hundis* were letters of credit issued for long distance trade.

[13] Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat*.

[14] In his study of eighteenth-century Gujarat Ghulam Nadri argues that the state was in constant negotiation with local merchants. The merchants of Gujarat due to their control over capital were powerful enough that the state had to share sovereignty with them. This conclusion supports my argument that the dominant merchant communities played an influential role in Gujarati society and that the princely state administrations during the colonial era needed their constant support in order to pass new economic or social policies. Ghulam A. Nadri, *Eighteenth-Century Gujarat: The Dynamics of a Political Economy, 1750-1800* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), p. 9-22.

[15] Tambs-Lyche, *Power, Profit and Poetry*, p. 277-82.

rulers. Shantidas Zaveri, head of the Oswal Jain community of Ahmedabad, was a financier and jeweler to Mughals. He provided loans to the Mughals in times of need and helped in securing financing for military expeditions.[16]

Merchants were often also involved in succession disputes between various princes. Shantidas's sons and relatives lent money to Murad Baksh, a son of Emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1627-58) and *subahdar* (governor) of Gujarat. On Aurangzeb's victory Shantidas found himself in a difficult position. He had been close to Aurangzeb's estranged father Shah Jahan and his family had supported the now defeated Murad. Shantidas sought an audience with Emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707) to salvage his long standing relationship with the Mughal court. Aurangzeb as the new king was also interested in conciliation with the people of Ahmedabad and treated Shantidas as their representative. As a gesture of good will Aurangzeb repaid the money Murad had borrowed from Shantidas's family.[17] Realizing the need to have the support of influential financiers, especially in centers of Mughal power such as Ahmedabad, Aurangzeb issued a royal decree respecting the concessions given to Shantidas by Shah Jahan.[18]

Interdependence between merchants and rulers should not be confused with equality. Though rulers valued cooperation from commercial communities and cultivated friendly ties with powerful merchants, bankers and financiers, the relationship was not between equal partners. Merchants were deferential to their king in Mughal times and continued to do so during the colonial era. Men of commerce needed protection from the

---

[16] Tripathi, *Dynamics of a Tradition*, p. 27.
[17] Gillion, *Ahmedabad*, p. 15-16.
[18] Tripathi, *Dynamics of a Tradition*, p. 28-29.

state, making them dependent on the ruling class. In his work on Surat, Douglas Haynes argues that in a climate of political uncertainty, deferential behavior by merchants towards the ruling class became an important survival tactic.[19] Gujarati merchants (Hindu Vanias, Jains and Indian Muslims who were converts from Hinduism and retained their caste cultures) have lived in a society ruled by political "outsiders" as they did not have family, caste or religious ties with the political class (Muslims tracing Middle Eastern or Central Asian descent and Hindu Rajputs). For years Gujarat had been under Sultanate, Mughal or Maratha rule. With arrival of the British, Gujarati merchants were now under another foreign political power. In such an environment Gujarati merchants developed a ritual of gift-giving to cultivate and maintain ties with the "foreign" political rulers. These rituals respected and accepted the culture of the ruling class. By giving gifts meaningful to the rulers, Gujarati merchants showed their willingness to live by the rules set by the sovereign in return for protection.

During the Mughal era, merchants gave gifts in the form of jewels or cash to Mughal noblemen and their representatives. These gifts could also take the form of "loans" to rulers in times of war with little expectation of repayment. Gift-giving by merchants reflected their subordinate status to the ruler and also signified their acceptance of such a position. In return merchants expected protection from the Mughal court of their property and way of life. Royal *farmans* (edict or order) dictated by Jahangir (r. 1605-27) and Shah Jahan instructed imperial officials to aid Shantidas Zaveri's agents at Mughal ports, to offer his men and goods safe passage. The Mughal

[19] Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual*, p. 81-83.

court also granted royal protection to Shantidas's family and properties.[20] These concessions were in return for the financial assistance provided by Shantidas to Jahangir and Shah Jahan. It is easy to see why merchants gave gifts to the political power as it was a valuable investment for them. But the rulers too needed these gifts as they helped finance military expeditions and meet administration costs. Mughal noblemen needed mercantile gifts to maintain a luxurious lifestyle expected of nobility. Since merchants gave gifts of symbolic and material importance to the rulers, the ritual of gift-giving helped reproduce Mughal cultural norms.[21]

Pre-colonial mercantile culture carried on to the British era with Gujarati merchants adopting causes important to Indian princes and the British in return for political protection. During nineteenth century the gift-giving culture transformed into the practice of merchants supporting social projects important to their rulers.[22] By doing so merchants continued to reproduce the culture of the ruling class. As seen in previous chapters, during the second half of the nineteenth century, English-educated princes modernized their administrative bureaucracy, built roads and railways, made formal education a pre-requisite for state employment, and promoted modern medicine.[23] In this chapter I will examine how and why Gujarati merchants continued their tradition of gift-giving to the political class as per the latter's cultural norms by supporting institutions and civic causes important to Indian princes and colonial authorities.

---

[20] Tripathi, *Dynamics of a Tradition*, p. 23-24.

[21] Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual*, p. 83-89.

[22] Victorian culture frowned on gift-giving labeling it as corruption. British administrators in India encouraged Indian elites to support liberal causes such as education, healthcare and sanitation.

[23] See chapters 3 and 4 above.

Rajput culture focused on martial and chivalrous values while Vaishnav-Jains strictly adhered to non-violence. My work shows that while rulers and merchants lived by differing ethical codes, it was part of their *dharma* (moral duty) to support each other. In fact, by twentieth century, merchants began to share their rulers' reformist views. I do not see merchant-ruler relationships defined by a constant rivalry due to their differing ethical values. Instead, I argue that merchants and rulers shared a symbiotic relationship and despite their different ethical systems, their cultures shared many commonalities. My work shows that merchants were not just reproducing the culture of the ruling class, they were also promoting their own culture, as *rajadharma* (duties of a king) and mercantile ethos had merged on many social issues by early twentieth century.

Mercantile Ethos

Who are the Gujarati merchants and can we treat them as a homogeneous group? Gujarati merchants belong to different religions and castes so they are far from homogeneous. Hindu scriptures allow the Vaishya caste to engage in trade. In Gujarat however, non-Vaishyas have been involved in trade since medieval times. Out of the two main Hindu communities engaged in commerce, Vaishnav Vanias[24] and Bhatias, only the former are Vaishya by caste. Bhatias migrated to Gujarat in the fourteenth century from Lahore and Multan and claim descent from Kshatriyas. Bhatias started engaging in trade from the sixteenth century, around the same time they adopted Vaishnavism, religion of

[24] I will use the appropriate caste term Vania instead of occupational term Bania popularized in the colonial era. The British used Bania to refer to anyone engaged in trade. A Jain Marwari of Bengal and Vallabhacharya Vaishnav of Gujarat were both Banias in British accounts.

their co-traders the Vallabhacharya Vanias.[25] Gujarati Jains are another trading group, often belong to the Vania caste, but are not Vaishyas by descent. Oswal Jains, the main Jain sect involved in trade in Gujarat, are originally from Marwar (Rajasthan) and claim descent from Kshatriyas.[26] Despite their Kshatriya origins, by nineteenth century, Jains and Bhatias had become a part of the Vaishya trading world and were regarded as traditionally trading castes. There is also evidence of Gujarati Brahman involvement in trade from seventeenth century onwards.[27] Ranchhodlal Chhotalal, a Nagar Brahman, started the first textile mill in Ahmedabad in 1861 with prominent Jain merchants as shareholders.[28] Since Gujarati culture did not look down on men engaged in commerce there are ample examples of non-Vaishyas involved in trade.

Besides Hindus and Jains, Gujarat has Parsis and various Muslim sects engaged in commerce. Gujarati Muslims involved in trade include the Bohras, Khojas and Memons. Khojas are Nizari Ismaili Shias and the community was involved almost exclusively in trade.[29] Among Shia Bohras, the Daudis are the most prominent group in trade. They are descendants of Hindu trading groups who converted to Shia Islam after the eleventh century.[30] Memons trace their descent to Lohanas (Hindus) of Sind who converted to Islam. On migrating to Gujarat, Memons divided themselves into three groups: Halai

---

[25] Tripathi and Mehta, "Class Character of the Gujarati Business Community," in *Business Communities of India*, ed. Tripathi, p. 155-56.

[26] Tripathi, *Dynamics of a Tradition*, p. 9-13

[27] Tripathi and Mehta, "Class Character of the Gujarati Business Community," in *Business Communities of India*, ed. Tripathi, p. 154-55.

[28] For more on Ranchhodlal Chhotalal see Gillion, *Ahmedabad*, p. 81-85; Dwijendra Tripathi and Makrand Mehta, *Business Houses in Western India: A Study in Entrepreneurial Response, 1850-1956* (Ahmedabad: Indian Institute of Management, 1981).

[29] Misra, *Muslim Communities in Gujarat*, p. 74.

[30] Ibid., p. 70.

Memons moved to Saurashtra, Kutchi Memons lived in Kutch and Surati Memons settled in Surat.[31] Since the above mentioned communities were descendants of converts from Hindu castes they retained many of their pre-Islamic customs. For traders and merchants the most relevant was transmission of inheritance from father to son while excluding daughters. This Hindu practice facilitated accumulation of capital along agnatic patrilineal lines and was followed by Hindu, Jain and Muslim merchants.[32] Structurally the Gujarati Muslim trading communities had (and still do) many similarities to Hindu sub-castes (*jnati*). Gujarati Muslims had sect-specific *jamats* which acted similar to a *jnati panchayat* (caste council) in regulating behavior of their members. Those who disobeyed *jamati* rules faced social ostracism and in severe cases excommunication. For Hindus, Jains and Muslims, the family was the primary unit around which business was built followed by the sub-caste or sect.

Parsis follow the Zoroastrian faith and migrated to India from Iran in the seventh century. They shifted from agriculture to trading in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Parsis were the first migrants to follow the English East India Company to Bombay and work as brokers for Europeans. Eventually some Parsis became independent merchants and industrialists. The Parsis benefited economically and socially from their proximity to the British and their willingness to learn English. Among Gujaratis, Parsis were trailblazers in the world of business, western education, colonial administration and

[31] Tirmizi, "Muslim Merchants of Medieval Gujarat," in *Business Communities of India*, ed. Tripathi, p. 63-64.

[32] Ibid., p. 64-65.

ultimately nationalist politics.[33] During the colonial era Parsis were more active in Bombay and Surat. Though there were some prominent Parsis in princely states such as Diwan Bezanji Merwanji of Gondal.

As seen above, Gujarati merchants did not form a homogeneous group. There was great diversity along religious and caste lines. Yet, they did share common values and had organizations that cut across socio-cultural lines. There did exist a Gujarati mercantile ethical code of conduct to which all merchants adhered. It was an integral part of the Gujarati mercantile ethos to continuously enhance one's standing in society with appropriate acts as social prominence was integral for economic success. Since the family was the building block for all Gujarati trading castes, the commercial and socio-cultural world of the merchant overlapped and a negative mark in either of the two domains affected the other. It was essential for merchants to have a reputation of credit-worthiness. Without trust from their customers and partners, merchants could not function. The *hundi* system of trade depended entirely on trust. A particular family or an entire caste's ability to mobilize significant amounts of capital in short time and carry out transactions based on credit highlighted their high status within the trading community. *Abru* (reputation, credit) in the world of commerce depended on *abru* in broader society

[33] For more on Parsis see Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India*; David L. White, "Parsis in the Commercial World of Western India, 1700-1750," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 24 (1987): 183-203; Dosabhai Framji Karaka, *History of the Parsis, Including Their Manners, Customs, Religion and Present Position*. 2 Volumes (London: Macmillan, 1884).

and vice-verse. Maintaining and improving one's *abru* was an integral aspect of mercantile ethos in pre-colonial times and continued on during the colonial era.[34]

The society expected merchants to act as city-leaders in times of crisis. As explained earlier, Surat's leading merchants, the Jain Virji Vorah and the Muslim Haji Muhammad Zahid Beg, negotiated with Shivaji after the first Maratha raid and asked Aurangzeb for greater protection. Ahmedabad's merchants also paid repeated ransoms to the Maratha invaders. Stepping up during times of political crisis to protect the city's residents was part of the Gujarati mercantile code. Merchants were also expected to provide relief during times of natural disasters such as famines, droughts, floods and earthquakes. All of the above secular acts enhanced a merchant's *abru* and reaffirmed his standing as an influential resident of his city.

Hindu, Jain and Muslim merchants also cultivated *abru* by performing *seva* (religious and social service) appropriate to their religion.[35] Sponsorship of festivals, shrines and saints, building of wells were acts of *seva* encouraged by Hinduism, Jainism and Islam. While a merchant's *abru* definitely depended on his actions in the commercial world, it was also influenced by his standing in society. Hindu and Jain merchants enhanced their social prominence by following their *dharma* (ethical code) grounded in Vaishnavism and Jainism. Vaishnav and Jain *dharma* required adherents to maintain a frugal life-style, abstain from polluting substances such as alcohol and meat, arrange

[34] My work on merchants in Saurashtra borrows from Douglas Haynes's work on mercantile culture in Surat and Christopher Bayly's studies of merchants in northern India. Haynes, "From Tribute to Philanthropy," p. 339-60; Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual*, p. 52-94, 108-44; Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen, and Bazaars*, chapter on the "merchant family," p. 369-93.

[35] Religious gifting as a way to enhance social prominence was not unique to Gujarati mercantile society. See Rudner, *Caste and Capitalism* for religious gifting by merchants in south India.

suitable marriages for family members and patronize religious institutions and festivals. For a merchant, enhancing one's social and economic credit by performing acts of service was an ethical, religious and pragmatic decision.

Under Shantidas Zaveri's influence, Shah Jahan confirmed rights of Jains over their ancient temples on the Shatrunjaya Hills in Bhavnagar and at Sankheshwar near Palanpur.[36] As the Mughal financier and jeweler amassed his fortune, he built a magnificent Jain temple in Ahmedabad called the Chintamani temple. The temple was made of marble and its walls and ceilings inlaid with precious stones. Shantidas also maintained *panjrapole* (animal shelters) in various parts of Gujarat.[37] Shantidas's services for the Jain community resulted in his becoming the leader of Jains in Ahmedabad. Shantidas was also able to become a leading figure in the city because of his excellence in the world of commerce, his proximity to the political power of the time and his *seva* for his religion. His financial, political and religious achievements were intertwined and could not have been achieved independently of one another. For the merchants, the secular was intertwined with the religious.

Abru had to be constantly cultivated by every successive generation of the family. *Abru* was transferred from father to son, but the son could increase or decrease the family's *abru* by his actions. Shantidas's descendants lost the family's position of influence in Ahmedabad. By Dalpatbhai's time in mid-nineteenth century the family

[36] Tripathi, *Dynamics of a Tradition*, p. 26.

[37] Animal welfare is an integral component of Jainism. One gains good *karma* by caring for animals and showing respect for life.

remembered Shantidas with pride and nostalgia.[38] The family's modest position among Ahmedabadi Jains changed after Dalpatbhai made a fortune in the "share mania" of 1864-65.[39] Dalpatbhai used the money he made from speculation to reorganize his money-lending business by starting a banking firm. His son Lalbhai, a product of Western education, expanded the family business from banking to textile mills.[40] Lalbhai's son Kasturbhai went on to become the biggest textile magnate in Ahmedabad. Dalpatbhai used his newly acquired wealth from the "share mania" to enhance his social standing. He generously donated to Jain charitable causes which improved the family's standing within the Jain community. Lalbhai became the President of the Anandji Kalyanji Trust, an organization that had been founded in the 1720s to manage Jain temples. He was the secretary of the Shvetambra Jain Conference from 1903-08. He also built a rest house for travelers (*dharmshala*) in the memory of his father.[41] Since pilgrimage to Jain holy centers is an integral aspect of the religion, building rest houses for travelers along the pilgrimage route is an act of great service. Kasturbhai carried on his father's legacy and became the President of the Anandji Kalyanji Trust in 1925.[42] Through religious service, Dalpatbhai, Lalbhai and Kasturbhai were following the Jain mercantile code.

---

[38] Information on Dalpatbhai, his son Lalbhai and grandson Kasturbhai comes from Dwijendra Tripathi's business biography (*The Dynamics of a Tradition*) of one of Ahmedabad's leading industrialists, Kasturbhai Lalbhai.

[39] The US Civil War cut off Britain's supply of raw cotton. The British textile industry turned to the colonies in search for raw cotton. The price of cotton in India shot up during the civil war years. Tripathi, *Dynamics of a Tradition*, p. 38-40.

[40] Tripathi, *Dynamics of a Tradition*, p. 40-43.

[41] Ibid., p. 50.

[42] Ibid., p. 198.

With the family's improved fortune under Dalpatbhai and his descendants, the family began to play an important role in society, first among Jains through the above mentioned activities, and later in the broader society of Ahmedabad. In 1918, due to failure of monsoons there were famine conditions in Kheda and Panch Mahal districts and later in northern Gujarat. The Gujarat Sabha started a famine relief committee with Kasturbhai as one of the secretaries.[43] Kasturbhai's job was to collect money for famine relief from mill owners and *mahajans* of Ahmedabad. In this Kasturbhai was following the tradition set by Gujarati merchants for centuries. As expected from a leading industrialist, Kasturbhai was helping his city and the surrounding areas in times of crisis. Gujarati merchants in pre-colonial as well as colonial times played a key role in city governance. Where men of the Kasturbhai family differed from their pre-colonial predecessors was in their support for social reform organizations.

Dalpatbhai was a founding member of Vidyabhyasak Mandali, an association for promoting formal education, and was active in the Gujarat Vernacular Society.[44] Founded in 1848, the Gujarat Vernacular Society encouraged the development of Gujarati language and literature. Though it was initially headed by a European committee, Gujarati intellectuals quickly assumed control of GVS and turned it into an organization through which Gujarati elites asserted their cultural and social dominance in the region.[45]

---

[43] In addition to Kasturbhai, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Indulal Yagnik were also secretaries in the famine relief committee. The world of nationalist politics in Gujarat was heavily inter-mixed with mercantile society. Ibid., p. 173-74.

[44] Tripathi, *Dynamics of a Tradition*, p. 40-41. I talk in chapter 2 about the Gujarat Vernacular Society's contribution towards formal education and social reform.

[45] Isaka, "Gujarati Elites and the Construction of a Regional Identity in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *Beyond Representation*, ed. Bates, p. 153.

By becoming involved in the activities of the GVS, Dalpatbhai was presenting himself as one of the leaders of the city of Ahmedabad and enhancing his family's standing in society. While Dalpatbhai's actions were aimed at his Jain community and the residents of Ahmedabad, his choice to support reformist organizations was a result of colonial influence.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, British men brought their Victorian values to India and encouraged Indians to engage in public acts of charity. The colonial government encouraged Indians to build schools, libraries, hospitals and support acts of public service like their counterparts in Victorian England. These actions were meant to bring India out of her "backward" state on the path to progress. In keeping with the reformist spirit of the time Gujarati merchants started viewing sponsorship of educational institutions as an act of *seva*. Support for western education and social reform was a departure from mercantile culture of pre-colonial times. Yet, it was also a continuation of the risk-averse behavior of merchants.[46] Bayly and Haynes argue that the shift in behavior of merchants in nineteenth century was not radical. It went along with the risk-averse mercantile ethic that sought to build and maintain stable relationships with rulers and members of community. Compromise and collaboration are integral to Gujarati mercantile culture which puts high value on avoiding conflict.[47] Gujarati merchants had behaved in a similar manner with the Mughals when they helped perpetuate Mughal cultural norms. By supporting institutions and causes espoused by the British, Gujarati

---

[46] Haynes, "From Tribute to Philanthropy," p. 340-41; Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen, and Bazaars*, p. 374.

[47] Tambs-Lyche, *Power, Profit and Poetry*, p. 252.

merchants were cultivating relationships with the colonial power and accepting the authority of the colonial state.

While philanthropy was different from tribute given to pre-colonial rulers, it did work to cultivate better relations with the imperial power. Those Indians who donated to progressive causes such as schools, libraries and hospitals were given a position in municipal organizations in colonially-ruled cities such as Ahmedabad and Surat. [48] A few who had set themselves apart by repeated acts of philanthropy were granted imperial titles and honors. Merchants welcomed such recognition as it was a sign of respect and enhanced the recipient's position in the eyes of British officials and administrators. More importantly the honoree increased his social prominence within his community as he had brought honor to the whole community. Gujarati merchants were very conscious of their own standing within their caste or religious community. Even those merchants such as Dalpatbhai who sent their sons to Western schools and supported reformist organizations were not cut off from their Oswal Jain community. As seen above, once Dalpatbhai's financial status improved he started playing a greater role in Ahmedabad's reformist circles and in Jain organizations. While patronizing liberal causes, Gujarati merchants continued to donate to religious causes such as temples, mosques, *panjrapole*, community feasts and festivals. British officers attempted to discourage religious gift-giving among merchants but were not successful. Gujarati merchants who enthusiastically promoted Victorian values continued to be closely linked with their religious communities.

[48] Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual*, p. 121-24.

By supporting reformist causes Gujarati merchants were engaging in acts of social importance.[49] While patronizing social reform was a departure from pre-colonial mercantile culture, sponsorship of causes in service of society was a very traditional aspect of mercantile ethos. What we see in the second half of the nineteenth century is Gujarati merchants adjusting to colonial rule by adopting British ideas of progress and reform. They accepted British norms in the hope that the new political power would let them continue in their position as leaders of the city.[50] Gujarati merchants in pre-colonial as well as colonial times showed deference to the political class in exchange for protection and minimum state intervention in their domestic life. By accepting Victorian culture merchants did not sever their links to traditional society. Just as *rajadharma* expanded to include reformist causes, Gujarati mercantile culture expanded to make room for Victorian values. In the case of Vaishnav and Jain merchants, donating to progressive causes became a part of their *dharma* as it was beneficial for the community to cultivate a friendly relationship with the most dominant political power in India. During the colonial era we do not see a radical transformation in the ethical code of Gujarati trading communities. Merchants did not give up so-called "backward" practices such as spending lavishly on religious feasts and festivals. They supported both "backward" religious activities as well as "progressive" causes such as Western education. What remained

[49] Merchants in other parts of India also exhibited similar behavior. Naval Kishore Munshi patronized educational institutions across northern India. He donated to both, the Islamic Deoband Madrasah and the Hindu Sanskrit *pathshalas* (schools). For an examination of how Naval Kishore Munshi's patronage increased his social prominence see Ulrike Stark, *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007), p. 124-51.

[50] Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual*, p. 141-44.

constant in the transition to colonial rule was the merchant's devotion to *seva* and his desire to maintain his *abru* within his community as well as the broader colonial society.

Merchant-Ruler Relationship in Princely States

Trading communities in British Gujarat adjusted to colonial rule by accepting British authority. Did such a change occur in the princely states of Saurashtra? I will examine how merchants of Saurashtra behaved in a manner similar to their counterparts living in areas under direct British rule, thus bridging the gap between scholarship on Princely India and British India. The colonial era brought a gradual change in the mercantile ethos of all Gujarati merchants, irrespective of where they lived. The two princely states (Bhavnagar and Gondal) I will examine were under Rajput rulers. As seen earlier in this chapter, Bhavnagar's rulers in eighteenth century started attracting merchants from other parts of Gujarat by giving them protection from Maratha invaders. Bhavnagar state also formed an alliance with the English East India Company to stop piracy, thus making Bhavnagar's ports more attractive to merchants. Bhavnagar's rulers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries added to such trade friendly policies by developing ports, roads and ultimately railways.[51] Bhavnagar state consulted traders while fixing tariff on imports and exports. Bhavnagar's ports traded with Bombay, Karachi, Rangoon (Burma) among others. In the 1920s, industries in Bhavnagar included

[51] *A Life-Sketch of H.H. Sir Bhavsinhji II, K.C.S.I., Maharaja of Bhavnagar, 1913*, p. 64-66, 111-12. For more on Bhavnagar state see chapter 3.

gins, presses, oil mills, flour mills, textile mills and factories to manufacture Western medicine.[52]

Gondal state did not have access to the sea but its towns (Dhoraji, Upleta and Gondal city) had well developed trading networks by land. Towards the end of nineteenth century, once Bhagvatsinh assumed control over Gondal, the state followed Bhavnagar's example in creating a pro-business environment. In 1893, a railway line started as a joint venture between Gondal and Porbandar, connected Dhoraji with Porbandar city.[53] Dhoraji was also connected to Bhavnagar state by railway. In 1909, to celebrate twenty five years of Bhagvatsinh's rule the state abolished collection of import and octroi duties.[54] Trading communities enthusiastically welcomed Bhagvatsinh's decisions to abolish or lower taxes in the state. To encourage traders Bhavnagar and Gondal lent money at low rates of interest. Bhavnagar and Gondal state's free trade policies benefited the state and were welcomed by merchants.[55]

Merchants and rulers in princely states continued their interdependent relationship from pre-colonial times. Gondal state was under a Jadeja Rajput ruler while its chief trading communities were Memons, Bohras, Khojas, Vaishnav Vanias and Jains. Bhavnagar state's trading communities were of a similar composition and the state was under a Gohil Rajput ruler. Trading communities in both these states lived under a ruler who did not belong to their caste or religion. Merchants in princely states were in a

---

[52] Adm Report of Bhavnagar State, 1924-25; *Life-Sketch of H.H. Sir Bhavsinhji II*, p. 57
[53] Administration Report of Gondal State, 1892-93; Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 136-48.
[54] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1909-1910.
[55] Spodek, *Urban-Rural Integration*, p. 51.

position similar to their counterparts in British Gujarat in having to deal with a political power that did not share their cultural values.

Howard Spodek has argued that there was potential for constant conflict between rulers and merchants in Saurashtra due to their differing value systems. Yet, they found a way to co-exist by not interfering in each other's spheres of influence.[56] Guarding one's honor and preserving reputation was integral to both Rajputs and merchants, but their *abru* depended on different behaviors. Rajputs were primarily concerned with acquiring and maintaining political power while merchants were apolitical and interested in trade. Rajputs placed emphasis on martial values and chivalry.[57] Vaishnav Vanias and Jains adhered to ideas of non-violence and non-confrontation. For merchants avoiding conflict was essential as violence disrupted the natural order. For Rajputs conflict was an opportunity to show one's credentials and its avoidance meant cowardice. Despite their different (at some level opposite) *dharma* the two groups needed each other as one exercised a monopoly over the use of force while the other controlled capital. As we will see merchants and rulers found a way to co-exist out of self-interest.

In the nineteenth century, merchants needed help from the state, to enact business friendly policies by developing transportation and lowering taxes. Thus, they actively cultivated a friendly relationship with rulers of their state. In pre-colonial times merchants assisted the king by financing his wars. Under British rule, Indian princes went from being heads of a military machine to trustees of their people overseeing

---

[56] Spodek, *Urban-Rural Integration*, p. 20-21.

[57] For an anthropological study of Saurashtra's various communities see Tambs-Lyche, *Power, Profit and Poetry* and David Pocock, *Kanbi and Patidar* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972).

development of roads, railways, schools and hospitals.[58] State budgets by the end of nineteenth century apportioned significant amounts to public works and civic causes. Merchants too adapted to this change in kingly behavior by supporting "progressive" causes instead of war. By sponsoring schools, hospitals and libraries, trading communities showed their appreciation for Gondal and Bhavnagar state's business friendly policies in a manner important to their rulers. Merchants in Ahmedabad and Surat patronized "progressive" causes to please the British, similarly merchants of Gondal and Bhavnagar supported educational institutions to gain recognition from their reformist rulers.[59]

Gaorishankar Oza, the reformist Diwan, started the first school for girls in Bhavnagar in 1857.[60] In order to garner public support for his radical move, Oza enlisted help from the city's leading merchants. For his experiment to be successful, Oza needed the backing of the influential trading communities as they were city leaders. All the powerful sections of the state – the ruler, the Diwan's Nagar Brahman community and the merchants – needed to support the girls' school and they did just that at Oza's request. Promotion of education in Gujarat (in areas of British as well as princely rule) was a multi-class project. Social reform was not possible without support from the trading communities as they formed an influential bloc in Gujarat and had a tradition of assuming leadership positions throughout history. Thus, reformist princely states needed

[58] I have examined this transition in kingly behavior in chapter 3.

[59] See chapter 4 for Gondal under the reformist Prince Bhagvatsinh. I examine in detail Bhagvatsinh's educational policy.

[60] For more on the first girls' school in Bhavnagar see chapter 2. For women's education see chapter 5.

cooperation from their merchants in order to enact liberal policies and become "model" states. Those rulers aiming to promote reformist policies could not do so without help from their trading communities.

Sheths become Reformers

The capital city of Gondal was a Rajput-dominated territory home to the ruling family, the *bhayat*[61](brotherhood) and the *grasias* (feudal aristocracy). The cities of Dhoraji and Upleta were the commercial centers dominated by the trading communities. Though the political and financial powers were geographically separated, the rulers and merchants were both integral to the proper functioning of the state. Influential merchants used the honorific title of "*sheth*," a title that crossed religious boundaries. *Sheths* played a key role in state functions such as celebrations marking the ruler's birthday or the anniversary of his ascending the *gadi* (throne). During the silver jubilee functions in1909 marking Bhagvatsinh's twenty-five years of rule, representatives of various *mahajans* attended the festivities.[62] Sheth Nurmohmad Ahmad, one of the leading Muslim merchants of Gondal, hosted Raja Bhagvatsinh at his house. Other *sheths* also hosted the ruling family, fellow merchants and visiting dignitaries. While the silver jubilee celebrations were concentrated in the capital city, Bhagvatsinh's fifty-first birthday was

[61] In Rajput states the kingdoms passed undivided from the ruler to his heir, usually the eldest son. The younger sons of a ruler received revenue collecting rights over certain villages in order to support themselves. Descendants of the younger sons remained under the authority of the parent state and were called the *bhayat* or *bhayad*, meaning the brotherhood.

[62] Information about the silver jubilee celebrations are from Adm Report of Gondal State, 1909-10; Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 258-72.

celebrated statewide in 1915.[63] Committees set up in the cities of Gondal, Dhoraji and Upleta organized the festivities. Leading men in each city, many of them Hindu as well as Muslim merchants, were members of their city committee. In 1934, Gondal state celebrated fifty years of Bhagvatsinh's rule. Sheth Nurmohmad Ahmad of Gondal was once again involved and served as the President of the Golden Jubilee Committee. Other members of the committee were Revashankar Vanechand Parekh, President of the Merchants Corporation of Dhoraji and Sheth Adam Haji Ismail Fullara of Upleta.[64] Active involvement of Hindu and Muslim merchants at state events highlights their importance in Gondal. Besides representing the state population, society also expected merchants to act as leaders. Bhagvatsinh called upon merchants to support state policies such as his aggressive education policy.

Bhagvatsinh's interest in education impacted mercantile philanthropy in Gondal state. Just as the merchants of Bhavnagar supported the state's first girls' school in 1857 out of respect for Diwan Gaorishankar Oza, their counterparts in Gondal patronized educational institutions under Bhagvatsinh's influence. In 1909, to commemorate Bhagvatsinh's twenty-five years as the ruler of Gondal, the Hindu *mahajans* of Gondal, Dhoraji and Upleta united to announce an endowment from which an annual prize would be bestowed upon a top ranking Hindu student.[65] Sheth Tribhovandas Dhanji of the Bhayavadar Ginning Factory started an endowment for the creation of a prize given to a

[63] Information about Bhagvatsinh's fifty-first birthday celebrations are from Adm Report of Gondal State, 1915-16; Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 321-38.

[64] *Gondal's Cherished Treasures*, p. 1-4.

[65] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1909-10; Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 270.

boy and a girl who stood first in the annual examinations in the Bhayavadar district.[66] These prizes were called "Shri Bhagvatsinhji Silver Jubilee Prizes." A few years later when Bhagvatsinh turned fifty-one, Sheth Yakub Abdul Gani started a *madrasa* in Gondal city.[67] Though living in Burma, Yakub Abdul Gani wanted to make a contribution to his hometown and chose an important occasion in his ruler's life to do so.

Gujarati merchants added educational institutions to their list of charities in response to the reformist climate created by certain princes, the educated middle class (mainly Brahmans) and the colonial government. The ruling class in Bombay, Ahmedabad and Bhavnagar pushed for education earlier than that in Gondal. Hence, the merchants of these cities started donating to schools earlier. *Mahajans* or individual merchants rarely took the initiative in bringing about social reform. Their risk-averse stance on social issues meant they would only take a position if the other two dominant communities, the Brahmans and the political class (Rajputs, Muslims or British), had publicly declared their allegiance to the cause. Mercantile ethos required Gujarati merchants to assume leadership positions when called upon by rulers or in times of social distress. Traditionally, merchants helped out during natural disasters or engaged in diplomatic efforts during political crisis. Once the ruling class and intelligentsia started promoting liberal education, the merchants followed suit.

Historically, *mahajans* and Muslim *jamats* made charitable contributions to hospitals, orphanages, animal shelters, food banks and religious organizations. During the

---

[66] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1909-10; Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 270-71.
[67] *The Bombay Chronicle*, October 27, 1915; Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 329.

famine years of 1897-1901, Gondal and Dhoraji *mahajans* provided food and aid to the poor and donated fodder to *panjrapole* (animal shelters). Sheth Adam Pirbhoy of Bombay, a Bohra Muslim and native of Dhoraji, provided food in his hometown to people of all religions.[68] He also maintained shelters for the poor, pregnant women, sick and handicapped. The *Anjuman-i-Islam* of Dhoraji sold grains to all at prices below the market rate.[69] In the first decade of the twentieth century, merchants of Gondal chose to extend their charitable giving to educational institutions under Bhagvatsinh's influence. In doing so they were following the time honored mercantile tradition of showing deference to one's ruler by espousing his cultural values.

By supporting Bhagvatsinh's reformist leanings, Gondal's merchants accepted his authority and legitimized his rule. It was no coincidence that the *mahajans* in the key cities of Dhoraji, Upleta and Gondal announced an endowment for a scholarship prize during the silver jubilee celebrations for Bhagvatsinh. For the *mahajans* the decision to create an endowment was of a political nature and it was only appropriate that they do so around an important state event. When Tribhovandas Dhanji established annual prizes for boys and girls in his home district of Bhayavadar, they were aptly named "Shri Bhagvatsinhji Silver Jubilee Prizes." Yakub Abdul Gani was using the same rationale as his Hindu counterparts by starting the *madrasa* to commemorate an important milestone in his ruler's life. During official state events influential people were expected to reaffirm their loyalty to the ruler. Giving gifts or tribute to the ruler was a time honored ritual by

[68] Adm Report of Kathiawar, 1899-1900.
[69] Singh, *Maker of Modern Gondal*, p. 228-29.

which the gift giver expressed his support for the ruler. In early twentieth century Gondal, merchants pledged their loyalty to the ruler by giving gifts as well as patronizing education. Though the merchant and ruler did not exist on an equal footing, the ruler did benefit whenever he received support from prominent individuals or communities in his state, especially while promoting social change. With the ruler, the Nagar Brahmans and the trading castes, all supporting formal schooling for boys and girls, Bhagvatsinh's education policy gained legitimacy.

Bhagvatsinh reciprocated the support given by his trading communities by respecting their religious and cultural sensibilities. In doing so he was following his duties as the sovereign which involved providing protection to his peoples. *Rajadharma* included patronizing religious institutions and leaders, adjudicating disputes among various communities and protecting all subjects.[70] Throughout his life Bhagvatsinh received public praise from the trading castes of his state for abolishing octroi and import duties in 1909. Merchants also benefited from the public works department's maintenance of roads and railways. In addition to fostering a pro-trade environment Bhagvatsinh protected trading castes' cultures.

During state events such as the silver and golden jubilees of his rule and his various birthdays, Bhagvatsinh paid his respects at various Vaishnav, Shaiva and Jain temples and Muslim mosques. These visits by Bhagvatsinh to places of worship publicly

[70] Ramusack, *Indian Princes and Their States,* p. 4-5. For a case study on how princes used their religious affiliations to enhance their political authority within as well as outside their state see Ramusack, "Punjab States: Maharajas and Gurdwaras: Patiala and the Sikh Community," in *Peoples, Princes and Paramount Power*, ed. Jeffrey, p. 170-204.

renewed his commitment to act as protector and benefactor of his subjects.[71] The state gave an annual grant to *panjrapole* in Gondal, Dhoraji, Upleta and Bhayavadar, the four key cities.[72] Giving gifts or *dharmic largesse* to religious groups claiming kingly support was also a part of *rajadharma*.[73] Donations to *panjrapole* were meant to please the Jain merchants who placed a high premium on maintaining animal shelters. Bhagvatsinh's decision had the desired effect. In a speech given in Dhoraji for the golden jubilee ceremony, Chaganlal N. Chinoy, Barrister-at-law, said the following: "I have heard old Bania Mahajans saying that his [Bhagvatsinh] special love and generosity for the cattle and dumb animals, happens to be one of his greatest merits."[74] Bhavnagar state also provided protection to communities besides the ruler's Rajput caste. The Shvetambra Jain Conference held their annual session at Bhavnagar in 1908 with the ruler Bhavsinh II in attendance. Bhavnagar built a railway line connecting its city of Sihor to capital of Palitana state, a major cotton producing region. Besides the economic benefits of such a connection, religious sensibilities of Jains and Hindus were a major consideration. The railway line would pass by Shatrunjaya Hills which is one of the holiest sites for Jains, many making biennial pilgrimages. Additionally, Palitana is an important pilgrimage center for Hindus.[75]

---

[71] For religious patronage by princes see Philip Lutgendorf, "Ram's Story in Shiva's City: Public Arenas and Private Patronage," in *Culture and Power in Banaras: Community, Performance, and Environment, 1800-1980,* ed. Sandria B. Freitag (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1989), p. 34-61. Lutgendorf also briefly mentions religious philanthropy by the "princes of industry" such as Birlas.

[72] *Gondal's Cherished Treasures*, p. 77-88; *The Bombay Chronicle*, August 27, 1934.

[73] Price, *Kingship and Political Practice*, p. 190.

[74] *Gondal's Cherished Treasures*, p. 69.

[75] *Life Sketch of Bhavsinhji II*, p. 71-75, 87.

In addition to Jains, Muslim *sheths* also praised Bhagvatsinh for treating his subjects the same irrespective of their caste or creed.[76] As evidenced by the presence of Muslim men on city committees, Gondal's population and the Rajput ruler accepted Muslim men in a leadership capacity. Trading communities in Dhoraji and Upleta were mainly Muslim (Memon, Bohras and Khojas). By the twentieth century Memons had established trading networks along the East coast of Africa, especially Zanzibar. Muslim merchants of Gondal were in a better position financially than their Hindu counterparts, a fact that was reflected in their acting as official representatives of their towns.

In the annual administration reports prepared by the state for over sixty years, there is only one mention of Bhagvatsinh honoring someone with a *poshak*. Sheth Nurmohmad Ahmad, the most respected merchant in all of Gondal, received a *poshak* of Rs. 10,000 for his services to farmers (*khedut*) in time of famine. The Sheth had distributed grains to farmers under state guarantee instead of selling his reserve in the open market at the prevailing high price.[77] Being called to help the ruler in times of crisis was a matter of honor and highlighted Sheth Nurmohmad's position of importance. By selling his large stock of grains below the inflated market price Sheth Nurmohmad was diffusing the panic created by increase in food prices during a time of famine. Bhagvatsinh asked him to take such a step and the Sheth was surely doing a favor for his ruler. But, he was also being a good Muslim by giving aid to the needy.

---

[76] *Gondal's Cherished Treasures*, p. 72-76; Adm Reports of Gondal State, 1909-1910, 1915-16 and 1934-35.

[77] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1919-20.

While patronizing secular causes to show deference to their ruler, merchants of Gondal continued to perform their religious duties. Sheth Nurmohmad Ahmad was the leader of the Gondal Memon Jamat and the President-elect of the All India Memon Conference in 1933.[78] Sheth Nurmohmad's support for Bhagvatsinh's reformist causes was an attempt at increasing his *abru* among his Memon community as well as the people of Gondal. He served as a leader of Memons as well as a representative of the people of Gondal. There were six private hospitals in Dhoraji and Gondal managed by trusts headed by *sheths*: Nandkunvarba Zenana Hospital, the Islamia Zenana Hospital, the Mahomadan Charitable Dispensary and the Dasha Shrimali Vanik Davakhana at Dhoraji; Suvarna Mahotsava Dasha Shrimali Vanik Davakhana and Mitra Mandal Dispensary at Gondal.[79] Gondal was not alone in having private hospitals run by a particular Muslim sect or a Hindu caste such as Dasha Shrimali Vanik. In Bhavnagar, Sheth Valimahomed, a Memon, opened a dispensary for ladies observing *purdah* and their children.[80] While most of the above hospitals were open to people of diverse backgrounds, patients preferred going to a hospital run by their own caste or religious community.[81] Since the building block of the mercantile firm was the family and caste, the same affiliations extended to all aspects of mercantile culture.

---

[78] *Gondal's Cherished Treasures*, p. 1-4

[79] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1929-30, 1936-37.

[80] Adm Report of Bhavnagar State, 1927-28.

[81] David Arnold has talked about the importance of medical philanthropy among mercantile communities in colonial India. The public act of donation raised the merchant's prestige within his community and brought him closer to the colonial power. Using examples of Parsis in Bombay, Arnold points out that while donors opened hospitals and dispensaries for the entire population, they often stipulated that a wing be set aside for members of one's own community. David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth Century India* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), p. 269-72.

We have seen how under the influence of reformist rulers Gujarati merchants started patronizing "progressive" causes such as schools and hospitals. For merchants, sponsoring reformist causes was the twentieth century equivalent of tribute to rulers. They showed deference to the king's authority by supporting and propagating his policies. In order to bring about radical social change such as education for girls, the king needed public support from influential people, and merchants occupied positions of social prominence in Gujarati society. While acting as secular philanthropists Gujarati merchants continued to patronize religious institutions, festivals and hosted caste dinners. Mercantile ethos expanded to also include secular philanthropy. This was a gradual change as opposed to a radical break from the past. Improving and enhancing one's *abru* continued to remain important for merchants. A Gujarati merchant's prime concern was preserving his social prominence. Since the family was the building block for every Gujarati business, the merchant was permanently bound to his caste-based or religious-based community. In such a culture secular philanthropy had communal origins.

Private schools were meant for boys and girls belonging to a specific community, such as the Khoja schools for girls in various towns across Bhavnagar state. The communal aspect of educational philanthropy was most evident in boarding houses (hostels) for out-of-town students. All boarding houses admitted students along caste and even sub-caste basis, for example among Vanias, Dasha Shrimali Vanias and Kapol Vanias had separate boarding houses.[82] The princely state often laid the framework for communal philanthropy by encouraging promotion of education on a caste-specific basis.

[82] Adm Report of Bhavnagar State, 1912-13, 1924-25; Adm Report of Junagadh State, 1937-38.

Prince Bhavsinh II of Bhavnagar took steps to encourage private funding for education in 1910s. Under his policy any community that gathered Rs. 50,000 for education would be rewarded by the state with an additional grant of Rs. 10,000 and given help in educating its members. Such a policy encouraged people to organize along communal lines as the state recognized associations on such a basis. The Audich Brahman community was the first to win the grant in 1925.[83] By 1930, the Jain, Lohana and Memon communities had also gathered enough money to receive state support for education.[84] The literate (Audich Brahman) and trading castes' (Jain, Lohana, Memon) success at gathering large amounts of money for education signifies a shift in the latter's attitude towards formal education.

Gujarati merchants had at first supported schools as a form of respect for their princely or British rulers. Over time, formal education also became important for the trading castes. I examined in chapter 3 how traditionally literate castes such as Nagar Brahmans took to Western education due to increasing professionalization of administrative bureaucracies. By late nineteenth (in case of British India) and early twentieth (in case of princely states) centuries, merchants also needed Western education if they were going to successfully navigate the modern business world and its complicated legal system. Between 1870 and 1930, the colonial state implemented commercial and contract laws that affected business firms, income tax and charitable endowments. [85] Trading castes needed to learn the culture of the ruling class in order to survive in the changing commercial world. Since the princely states of Gujarat traded

[83] Adm Report of Bhavnagar State, 1924-25.

[84] Adm Report of Bhavnagar State, 1930-31.

[85] Ritu Birla, *Stages of Capital: Law, Culture, and Market Governance in Late Colonial India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

with British-controlled cities of Bombay, Karachi and foreign territories such as Burma and East African countries, they too needed to learn the new system. In the twentieth century we see a rapid increase in Western education among trading castes. Mercantile support for education was no longer just a tribute to the reformist ruler, it had become necessary for the community itself.

With educated boys there was also a need for educating girls to keep them on the same intellectual level. As seen in the previous chapter, girls' education was linked to the betterment of the community. The goal for women's education was to make them "better" mothers and wives. Once women became integral to the revival of the community, their education gained support. The industrialist Kasturbhai Lalbhai's wife Shardaben had received limited education when they got married. Kasturbhai hired a tutor to teach Shardaben English as he believed knowledge of the language was crucial, even for women.[86] Kasturbhai had studied at Gujarat College, Ahmedabad and belonged to one of the most prominent families in the city. The English-educated Kasturbhai expected his wife to have knowledge of the dominant language of the day. Social reform among the trading castes was similar to the literate communities (Nagar Brahmans) in that the agenda was set by the male reformers and was in the interest of the community defined along caste or religious lines.

Trading castes started donating to schools for both boys and girls and provided scholarships to better serve their community. They also set up endowment funds to aid students with educational expenses at the high school level and beyond. Scholarships

[86] Tripathi, *Dynamics of a Tradition*, p. 58.

given to students were caste specific. Thakkar Jagjivan Lavji Women's Educational Fund provided scholarships to Lohana girls joining the Barton Female Training College at Rajkot to become teachers.[87] There was an increasing demand for female teachers to educate girls in Saurashtra. This demand is reflected in the numerous scholarships provided to women seeking training at the Barton College for women.[88]

Trading communities also donated across state lines during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In 1937, Haji Ibrahim and Haji Ali of Dhoraji (Gondal state) donated a generous amount to assist poor Muslim boys with their educational expenses at Bahauddin College in Junagadh state.[89] The committee responsible for helping Muslim boys with education had to turn away many applicants since they were facing a shortage of funds. Donation from the two Dhoraji *sheths* came at the right time and was welcomed by the College as well as the Diwan of Junagadh state. Educational philanthropy beyond princely state boundaries was a sign that the donor believed education was necessary for the betterment of his community. Charitable acts within one's state were often a form of tribute to the ruler. But donations in a different state signal the existence of a caste or community consciousness that transcended political boundaries.

Members of the Gujarati diaspora often started supporting social reform earlier than those resident in the princely states. Sheth Adam Pirbhai had migrated to Bombay from Dhoraji in nineteenth century. Influenced by the reformist climate of his adopted city Sheth Adam promoted education within his Bohra community in Bombay. In 1886

[87] Adm Report of Bhavnagar State, 1930-31.

[88] *Charitable Endowment Funds*.

[89] GSA-J, Bahauddin College Daftar, Letter from Principal M.M. Zuhuruddin Ahmad of Bahauddin College to Member, Junagadh State Council, 18 July 1937.

he turned his attention to Dhoraji and started a *madrasa* to teach Urdu and Arabic.[90] During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, members of various trading castes of Saurashtra migrated to Bombay, Calcutta, Karachi, Rangoon and British East Africa.[91] Many of these migrations were a result of constant famines and droughts in Saurashtra.[92] According to the 1911 census, 10 percent of trading caste men born in Saurashtra relocated to Bombay.[93] The same census showed 6 percent of Saurashtra-born men and women living in other parts of India. By 1931, 10 percent of Saurashtra's population was living elsewhere.[94]

Discontent with the ruler's trade policies was another reason behind members of the trading castes leaving Saurashtra. While bigger princely states such as Bhavnagar and Gondal promoted free trade much to the delight of their merchants, smaller princely states had restrictive trade policies in order to guard their sovereignty. Rulers of smaller princely states were afraid of integrating their economy with larger princely states or British India as such an action would reduce the ruler's control over his state and people.[95] In search of a more profitable environment for trade, Vaishnav Vanias, Jains, Lohanas, Bhatias, Memons, Khojas and Bohras moved to bigger commercial cities such as Bombay and Karachi.

---

[90] Adm Report of Gondal State, 1886-87.

[91] Makrand Mehta, "Gujarati Business Communities in East African Diaspora: Major Historical Trends," *Economic and Political Weekly* 36:20 (May 19-25, 2001): 1738-47.

[92] Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India*, p. 2-4.

[93] Spodek, *Urban-Rural Integration*, p. 25.

[94] Ibid., p. 53-54. Bombay was a popular destination for Saurashtra's emigrants. A majority of these men and women belonged to various trading castes. About 11 percent of emigrants were Brahmans.

[95] Ibid., p. 51-52.

Despite having left Saurashtra, members of trading castes continued to maintain contact with their homeland. Raja Bhagvatsinh periodically received gifts from Gondal's merchants living in Burma and other parts of the British Empire.[96] These gifts were a form of tribute by Gondal's residents living outside the state. Sending gifts to the ruler on his birthday or during the jubilee celebrations was a way to renew ties with the state and show that the merchant still accepted Bhagvatsinh's authority. Other merchants, instead of giving gifts to the ruler, reestablished their ties to the state by carrying out charitable activities. Nanji Kalidas Mehta of East Africa (originally from Porbandar) built schools in various villages of Porbandar including the Arya Kanya Gurukul for girls in the capital city. He developed close ties with the ruler of Porbandar and received the title of *raj ratna* (state treasure) for his many philanthropic activities.[97]

Many members of the Saurashtra diaspora came from humble backgrounds. Their primary reason for leaving their homeland was to seek a better life elsewhere. On having found success they wanted to enhance their *abru* back home by behaving in an appropriate manner. There were many ways for newly prosperous men to increase their *abru*: cultivate a closer relationship with the political power, donate money to religious institutions, or engage in philanthropy such as building schools, libraries and hospitals. Those men who were influenced by reformist thinking sought to aid their communities by philanthropy. Men such as Sheth Adam Pirbhai built *madrasas* to help their "backward" Bohra community "progress." Initially, Gujarati merchants supported reformist causes as

[96] *Gondal's Cherished Treasures*, p. 103-10.
[97] NAI, Western India States Agency, D/70/425 (1936).

a favor to their rulers, as a show of support for their Anglicized Rajput and British rulers. But, by the twentieth century, many merchants shared the reformist views of the political class and supported educational institutions due to personal convictions. We see the formation of a modern Gujarati culture shared by merchants, Princes and Brahmans. There was a merger between *rajadharma* and mercantile ethos on social issues as both the rulers and merchants believed that formal education for both boys and girls was essential for the betterment of society.

Merchants resident in Saurashtra as well as their counterparts in the diaspora played a role in promoting education in the region. Some were supporting educational institutions to help their communities while others were doing so at the urging of the political leadership (Indian princes or British administrators). The fact that charitable donations transcended political boundaries highlight the fluid nature of political lines between many princely states, British and Princely India, and even the world of the Indian diaspora. Just as Gujarati merchants played an important role in the reformist sphere during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they were also influential members in the nationalist movement. Not surprisingly, Gujarati merchants overwhelmingly supported their fellow Gujarati, Mohandas Gandhi.

Expansion of the "Community" to Include the Nation

In 1914, Mohandas Gandhi, a member of the Gujarati diaspora in South Africa returned to the mother country. With Gandhi's arrival on the Indian nationalist scene concern for the position of the community expanded to also include the nation. From the

nationalist perspective the entire nation needed to move in the direction of "progress." Thus it was important for children from all caste and religious communities to be educated. A prime example of an educational institution started for the "betterment" of the nation is the Arya Kanya Gurukul, established by the industrialist Nanji Kalidas Mehta in the princely state of Porbandar in 1936. The Porbandar *gurukul* (school) accepted girls of all castes and religions.[98] It was based on Swami Dayanand Saraswati's teachings regarding women's education as Mehta was a supporter of the Arya Samaj. The school also aimed to educate girls in a nationalist environment free from colonial control, hence its location in a princely state. As a supporter of Indian nationalism Mehta was doing his share by starting a nationalist school. Before I go into the genesis of the *gurukul* it is important to understand why industrialists such as Mehta supported the Indian National Congress.

When Gandhi returned to India from South Africa he chose to base himself in Ahmedabad for cultural reasons. The people of Ahmedabad who had followed Gandhi's *satyagrahas* in South Africa welcomed their fellow Gujarati. Gandhi received support from Gujarat's merchants from his earliest days in the Indian National Congress.[99] As a member of the Vaishnav Vania caste, Gandhi endeared himself to Gujarati merchants, especially Vaishnav and Jain Vanias of Ahmedabad. Gandhi's views on non-violence,

[98] S.V. Jani, *Saurashtra no Itihas*, (Ahmedabad: Darshak Itihas Nidhi, 2003), p. 401-03.

[99] Gillion, *Ahmedabad*, p. 153-60; Makrand Mehta, "Gandhi and Ahmedabad, 1915-20," *Economic and Political Weekly* 40:4 (Jan 22-28, 2005): 291-99.

vegetarianism and temperance appealed to Gujarati merchants as they originated from his own Jain influenced Vaishnav Vania culture.[100]

In addition to the cultural appeal, Gandhi's message also had an economic advantage for merchants. Ahmedabad's industrialists, heavily invested in textile mills, benefited from Gandhi's propagation of *swadeshi* (of one's country).[101] Indian industrialists had repeatedly asked the colonial government for economic policies favorable to domestic industries, but to no avail. The colonial government refused to implement protective tariffs to benefit Indian industrial development. In 1896, the Government of India placed an import duty on textiles from Britain in order to raise much needed revenue. Under pressure from the "Lancashire lobby" an equivalent amount of cotton excise tax was imposed on Indian textile production. During the First World War, Kasturbhai Lalbhai led the fight in the Indian Legislative Assembly to abolish the domestic excise tax on cotton. As a result of constant pressure from Indian industrialists the Government of India abolished the excise tax in 1926.[102] Indian textile mill owners had won a significant victory, but the Government of India's economic policy was not to their satisfaction. The mill owners turned to Gandhi whose advocacy of Indian-made products helped them. The Swadeshi movement for the purchase of Indian-made goods first started in Calcutta in 1905 as a protest following the Partition of Bengal. Swadeshi ideas gained steam in the 1920s and 30s under Gandhi and benefited Indian industries, especially textile mills. Leading industrialists (Ambalal Sarabhai, Kasturbhai Lalbhai) of

[100] Howard Spodek, "On the Origins of Gandhi's Political Methodology: The Heritage of Kathiawad and Gujarat," *Journal of Asian Studies* (Feb 1971): 361-72.

[101] Gillion, *Ahmedabad*, p. 155-57.

[102] Ibid., p. 155.

Ahmedabad supported Gandhi and his Sabarmati *ashram* for cultural as well as economic reasons.[103]

Gandhi and Congress's core supporters in Bombay during the civil disobedience campaigns of the 1930s were trading castes originally from Saurashtra and Kutch. These men and women supported Congress in the hopes that it would provide a more trade friendly environment in Saurashtra than the princely states and their British protectors.[104] John Wood describes the Rajkot Satyagraha of 1938-39 as a struggle between landed rulers and non-landed urban castes.[105] Leadership of the Rajkot *satyagraha* consisted exclusively of Brahmans and Vanias. Howard Spodek and Harald Tambs-Lyche argue there existed (still exists) a perpetual rivalry between the landed and trading castes, the Rajputs and Vanias (Vaishnav and Jain) of Saurashtra.[106] Rajput culture focused on martial and chivalrous values while Vaishnav-Jains strictly adhered to non-violence. My work shows that while rulers and merchants lived by differing ethical codes, it was a part of their *dharma* to support each other. As seen in the case of Gondal and Bhavnagar, rulers enacted policies favorable to the merchants; the trading castes returned this favor by supporting social reformist policies of English-educated Rajput princes. Only when the trading castes could not reach a compromise with the ruler did they turn to another

---

[103] Gandhi also received support from non-Gujarati industrialists. Gandhi's biggest benefactor was the Marwari business giant Ghanshyam Das Birla. For the history of the Marwari community during the colonial era see Thomas Timberg, *The Marwaris: From Traders to Industrialists* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978).

[104] Spodek, *Urban-Rural Integration*, p. 54.

[105] John Wood, "Indian Nationalism in the Princely Context: The Rajkot Satyagraha of 1938-39," in *People, Princes and Paramount Power*, ed. Jeffrey, p. 240-74; Spodek, *Urban-Rural Integration*, p. 55-59.

[106] Spodek, *Urban-Rural Integration*; Tambs-Lyche, *Power, Profit and Poetry*.

political power for protection. There were merchants of Saurashtra who continued to maintain close relations with princes even while supporting Congress; one such merchant was Nanji Kalidas Mehta of East Africa and Porbandar.

Figure 6.1 Raj Ratna Shri Nanji Kalidas Mehta
Courtesy of Arya Kanya Gurukul, Porbandar

Nanji Kalidas Mehta was born in a Lohana family in Gorana village in 1887. His parents were devout Vallabhacharya Vaishnavs. His family owned a grocery store and also bought, ginned and sold cotton at Porbandar.[107] The extended Mehta family was stretched out to Aden, Madagascar and Zanzibar. Going overseas in search of livelihood was common among the trading castes of Gujarat, especially Khojas, Memons, Bohras, Lohanas and Bhatias as unlike Vanias their caste did not ban them from crossing the seas. Mehta, following in the footsteps of his older brother and cousins, made his first trip to Africa at the age of fourteen. He lived for short periods of times in Mombasa (Kenya), Madagascar and Zanzibar. Mombasa was the commercial capital of East Africa attracting Gujaratis, Goans, Syrians, Arabs and Europeans. The Gujarati community was overwhelmingly Muslim (Bohras, Khojas and Memons). French Madagascar had Indians as well as Chinese and Malaysians.[108] Kutchi Memons and Bhatias were active in Zanzibar. From a young age Mehta learnt to interact with people from diverse backgrounds and look beyond caste boundaries. It was his exposure to such a society that made Mehta question upper caste restrictions on socialization.[109] Mehta made a second trip to Africa in 1905. This time around he went to Jinja, Uganda and lived with his uncle who arranged for him to work in a Baluchi merchant's shop.[110] Within a few years Mehta had gone into business for himself and owned a few shops run by members of his family.

[107] Nanji Kalidas Mehta, *Dream Half-Expressed* (Porbandar, 1966), p. 5-8.
[108] Ibid., p. 38, 50-55.
[109] Ibid., p. 43-49.
[110] Ibid., p. 78-86.

Starting as a small trader he ventured into growing cotton, sugar manufacturing and owning tea and coffee plantations in East Africa.

From his early days in Uganda, Mehta admired Sheth Allidina Visram. Visram, an Ismaili Khoja from Kutch, was the most successful and renowned Indian businessman in early twentieth-century Uganda.[111] Mehta idolized Visram as the latter was "a captain of commerce and man of charity." In Mehta's description of Visram we see the two qualities that were most important to Gujarati merchants: being successful in one's business and sharing that success with others. Mehta also admired Visram for employing both Hindu and Muslim men in his businesses.[112] Mehta himself had worked in the shop of a Baluchi Muslim merchant in Uganda. Gandhi too worked closely with Gujarati Muslims during his *satyagrahas* in South Africa. In a foreign land the "Indian" identity transcended caste or religious affiliations. On finding success as a businessman and industrialist in first Uganda and later India, Mehta turned to philanthropy.

Mehta's philanthropy crossed communal boundaries and supported various schools, libraries and hospitals in East Africa.[113] A majority of Mehta's charitable contributions, however, went to India, especially Saurashtra where he built schools, hospitals and refurbished Kirti Mandir (Gandhi's family home in Porbandar) following the Mahatma's death. The Gandhi and Mehta families shared a Porbandar as well as an African connection. While in South Africa to visit his brother and in-laws Mehta stayed

---

[111] I have briefly talked about Visram in chapter 4 when he visited Gondal to study the Grasia College as he was planning on building schools in Uganda. Visram sought guidance from Prince Bhagvatsinh during his visit to Gondal.

[112] Mehta, *Dream Half-Expressed*, p. 72-77.

[113] Robert G. Gregory, *The Rise and Fall of Philanthropy in East Africa: The Asian Contribution* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1992), p. 106.

for a few days at Gandhi's Phoenix Ashram.[114] By this time Gandhi had already made a name for himself by leading non-violent resistance against South African government's discriminatory policies. Through the years Mehta sought to strengthen his relationship with Gandhi and other Congress leaders.[115] On obtaining Gandhi's permission in 1944, Mehta started planning to build a memorial for the Mahatma. After Gandhi's assassination, a memorial to him at his family home in Porbandar called Kirti Mandir was opened to public.[116] Santokben Mehta (Nanji Kalidas's wife) immersed a portion of Gandhi's ashes in the Nile river at Lugazi. Mehta, like contemporary Gujarati industrialists, supported Gandhi out of regional, religious and nationalist sentiments.

Mehta decided to build the Arya Kanya Gurukul in Porbandar at the behest of fellow Indians in East Africa. It was a common practice among members of the Gujarati diaspora to send their children to India to receive schooling. Sayajirao, the Maharaja of Baroda, had already built an Arya Kanya Gurukul in his state.[117] Mehta's eldest daughter Savitaben studied at the Baroda institution. In 1935, a group of students from the Baroda school visited East Africa and impressed the Indian population with their skills in public speaking, physical exercises and cultural dances. Mehta answered the call to open a similar school in Saurashtra and chose Porbandar as the location. He already owned a textile mill, Maharana Mill, in Porbandar on land leased from the Maharana, the princely

---

[114] Mehta, *Dream Half-Expressed*, p. 200-02.

[115] Ibid., p. 156-62, 253-60.

[116] The Mehta family continues to maintain and renovate Kirti Mandir.

[117] There were many Arya Kanya schools and colleges across India. For a study of the first Arya Kanya college see Madhu Kishwar, "Arya Samaj and Women's Education: Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Jalandhar," *Economic and Political Weekly* 21:17 (April 26, 1986): 9-24.

ruler of Porbandar.[118] He had family connections to Porbandar and good relations with the ruling family. These two factors alone would have made Porbandar the ideal location. But there was another reason working in Porbandar's favor. Mehta wanted the *gurukul* to be free from colonial influences and control. He believed a princely state would be a better home for a nationalist institution. Natwarsinh, the Maharana of Porbandar, sold fourteen acres of land at a nominal price to Mehta, and Savitaben volunteered to take on the management of the new school.[119]

Arya Kanya Gurukul was based on Swami Dayanand Saraswati's teachings regarding women's education. Dayanand, born in Saurashtra in 1825 to orthodox Saiva Brahman parents, started the Arya Samaj, a sect that revolutionized Hinduism in north India. Dayanand opposed idolatry, supported widow remarriage and encouraged education for women. As per Arya doctrine, through education, one could achieve material, spiritual and social status. Dayanand's message of giving importance to merit and not birth appealed to the upwardly mobile commercial castes in north India as well as Gujarat. While venerating the Vedas and Sanskrit, Dayanand popularized the use of vernacular languages for transmission of Arya thought. The Arya Samaj gained authority and popularity due to its success in explaining the contemporary world of the British Raj

[118] NAI, WISA, D/26/202 (1935); Mehta, *Dream-Half Expressed*, p. 210-19.

[119] NAI, WISA, D/70/425 (1936); Mehta started building the mill in 1925, but because of problems in getting machinery to a princely state the mill did not start functioning until 1934. Meanwhile, the mill was used for political gatherings such as the fourth annual meeting of the Kathiawar Political Conference, attended by Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. KPC was Congress's branch in the princely states of Saurashtra. Mehta, *Dream Half-Expressed*, p. 204-09.

and providing a framework for urban Hindus that allowed them to be a part of the Anglicized world and still remain within the Hindu fold.[120]

Prarthana Mandir, Temple at Arya Kanya Gurukul, Porbandar

Figure 6.2 Photograph by Rashmikant Bhalodia

Dayanand was a strong critic of orthodox Hinduism that prevented women from being exposed to Vedic scriptures. This is reflected in the make-up of the Prarthana Mandir (prayer hall, see figure 6.2 above) at the Porbandar Gurukul. The prayer hall occupies a central position on the *gurukul* premises with all other buildings built around

[120] Jones, *Arya Dharm*.

it. All students irrespective of their caste gathered (and still do) each morning for prayers, with girls taking turns to participate in the daily *yagna* accompanied by *shlokas* in Sanskrit.[121] It is important to note that Mehta, coming from a Vallabhacharya family, was attracted to Dayanand Saraswati, an ardent critic of the Vallabhacharyas. Mehta, however, was not the first Gujarati Vaishnav attracted to Dayanand's teachings. Over half a century ago there was a small minority among Vallabhacharyas in Bombay who challenged the power of *maharajas* (religious leaders of the sect), and reached out to Dayanand. Karsandas Mulji of the Kapol Vania caste, a Vallabhacharya Vaishnav, was one such reformer.

Narmadshankar Lalshankar Dave, a Nagar Brahman, and Karsandas Mulji were active in reformist circles in Bombay in the mid-nineteenth century.[122] Karsandas started a weekly named *Satyaprakash* in 1855 after receiving financing from Sheth Mangaldas Nathubhai, a wealthy Kapol Vania.[123] Karsandas Mulji used *Satyaprakash* to advocate reforms within his caste. Kapol Vanias were members of the Vallabhacharya sect led by religious leaders called *maharajas*. Karsandas openly criticized veneration of the *maharajas* and believed Vallabhacharya practices were corrupt and perversions of Hinduism. He maintained that "true" Hinduism supported widow remarriage and was free from excessive ritualism. Jadunath Maharaj sued Karsandas for libel because of the

---

[121] Personal observations of the prayer hall and conversations with former students.

[122] For information on reformist movements in Bombay, especially among Gujaratis, see Raval, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in Gujarat,* p. 77-100.

[123] Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India*, p. 123. Sheth Mangaldas Nathubhai supported reformers in Bombay. His support for his fellow caste member Karsandas Mulji put him at odds with the leading *sheths* of the Kapol Vania community in Bombay. For more information on how rivalries between various *sheths* for caste authority played out in the reformist sphere see Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India*, p. 121-30.

latter's attacks in *Satyaprakash* against the sexual misconduct of the Vaishnav Maharajas with their female followers and charges of corruption. With the support of his Elphinstone classmates, the Bhatia[124] Sheth Lakhmidas Khimji, the Kapol Vania Sheth Mangaldas Nathubhai, and a sympathetic colonial justice system headed by the British, Karsandas won the case.[125]

The Maharaj Libel case of 1862 was essentially a conflict between social reformers and orthodox Hindus on what constituted Hinduism. After Karsandas's victory, the reformist circle retreated from pursuing more sensational causes. Yet, there still existed a desire for a form of Hinduism that suited their reformist tastes. Shortly before his death in 1871 Karsandas published a book entitled *Ved Dharma*, a product of his research on Hindu religious literature. In *Ved Dharma*, Karsandas advocated discarding idol and *guru* worship and identified the Vedas as the source of the "true" religion, Arya Dharma.[126] It is in this environment that Dayanand preaching the importance of Vedas became popular among Gujarati Hindus.

The shift towards Vedic Hinduism was not limited to the Elphinstone College-educated professionals such as Karsandas and Narmad. The founding members of the Arya Samaj in Bombay were Bhatias and Kapol Vanias *sheths*, most of them were not English-educated. Bhatias and Vanias in nineteenth-century Bombay came from different parts of Gujarat. A small section of Bhatias and Vanias supported reformers such as

---

[124] Bhatias were also members of the Vallabhacharya sect.

[125] For more on the Maharaj Libel case see Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India*, p. 65-70. To understand the colonial state's role in shaping and defining communities see Amrita Shoddhan, *A Question of Community*.

[126] Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India*, p. 254.

Karsandas Mulji. The Bhatia brothers, Lakhmidas and Dharmsi Khimji, favored widow-remarriage and campaigned against idol worship. In search of a *guru*, the Khimji brothers invited Dayanand to Bombay in October 1874.[127] During a series of public lectures Dayanand denounced the Vallabhacharya Sampradaya, attacked idolatry, blamed colonial education for being anti-nationalist, preached widow re-marriage and the study of Vedas as God's revelation to man.[128] From Bombay, Dayanand went on to tour Gujarat and established the Arya Samaj in Rajkot and Ahmedabad. The Arya Samaj in Bombay was established in April 1875 with the goal of bringing about social and religious reform on the authority of the Vedas. Chief among the founding members of the Bombay Arya Samaj were men from commercial backgrounds.[129] Many of these *sheths* had supported Karsandas Mulji during the Maharaj Libel case and welcomed Dayanand. Though the Maharaj Libel case did not result in a massive loss of following among the Vallabhacharya Sampradaya, it did affect those who supported the reformist agenda. These reformers in search of a new form of Hinduism found it in the Arya Samaj.[130] It is from this context that Sheth Nanji Kalidas Mehta emerges.

Mehta, a Lohana by caste, was born in a Vallabhacharya Vaishnav family. Yet, Mehta was more attracted to the new age Hinduism of the Arya Samaj. After reading

---

[127] Jordens, *Dayanand Saraswati*, p. 127-28.

[128] Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India,* p. 254-56.

[129] Sheths Lakhmidas Khimji, Mulji Thackersey, Chabildas Lalubhai Bhansali, Mathurdas Lowji and Madhavdas Rugnathdas came from commercial backgrounds. Khimji, Rugnathdas and Thackersey had long supported widow remarriage while Lowji and Bhansali ardently opposed idolatry.

[130] Raval, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in Gujarat,* p. 235-36. The Arya Samaj gained a few followers in Bombay and Gujarat, but it never enjoyed the popularity that it did in Punjab and northern India.

Satyarth Prakash[131] in 1911, Mehta became an admirer of Dayanand Saraswati. In his decision to move away from his Vallabhacharya upbringing, Mehta was following in the footsteps of the above mentioned Vallabhacharya merchants who over half a century ago moved towards the Arya Samaj. Just like the Bhatia and Kapol Vania *sheths* who founded the first Arya Samaj in Bombay, Mehta had not received a colonial education. Mehta supported the Arya Samaj as Dayanand's message of merit being more important than birth appealed to his upwardly mobile self. Having lived most of his adult life surrounded by people from diverse backgrounds, Mehta found caste exclusiveness suffocating. When his son and nephew got married Mehta saw to it that the marriage ceremony was simple and economical. In his extended family, he stopped the practice of exchanging gifts to commemorate auspicious occasions. He described lavish weddings as a "colossal waste of money, time and energy."[132] While Gujarati merchants supported modern education in the interest of "progress" for their communities or the Indian nation, Mehta implemented reformist values in his life. In this he was very different from other members of the Lohana caste since Vallabhacharya Vaishnavism embraced materialism and luxurious display of one's faith. Mehta represented the new generation of Gujarati merchants who in addition to supporting social reform lived by its values.

The Arya message allowed peoples from various castes to unite by accepting the supremacy of the Vedas and relinquishing caste-specific practices. The Arya Kanya Gurukul at Porbandar accepted girls from all castes and everyone participated in school

---

[131] Dayanand wrote *Satyarth Prakash* (Light of Truth), a statement of his ideas and beliefs, in 1875.

[132] Mehta, *Dream Half-Expressed*, p. 237.

prayers accompanied by Vedic rituals. A Dalit girl laid the foundation stone for the *gurukul* and the Maharana of Porbandar opened the school once it was built. The *gurukul* taught modern subjects such as mathematics, science, geography and history. Girls were given training in classical music, dance, drama and various sports.[133] The emphasis given on religious instruction matched Gandhi's views on education.[134] Gandhi also placed vernacular education above English-language schools. Mehta concurred and saw to it that Gujarati was the language of instruction at the *gurukul* and not English. Through an emphasis on Gujarati, Mehta gave primacy to a linguistic cultural identity, a regional nationalism of sorts.

By starting the *gurukul* Mehta was continuing the Gujarati mercantile tradition of assuming a leadership position in society. In Mehta's time the most respected charitable cause was education for girls. The Porbandar Maharana supported Mehta in his endeavor by donating land for the school. Mehta believed in the necessity to educate girls as they were integral to the regeneration of society. Unlike some of his contemporaries, Mehta was not just interested in uplifting his own caste. His definition of community crossed caste barriers and included the Indian "nation." Through the *gurukul* Mehta aimed to revive the Indian nation by educating girls in a nationalist environment devoid of colonial influences. While Mehta believed the Indian nation would be strengthened by educating girls in indigenous traditions, other Gujarati industrialists supported Western-style

---

[133] Conversations with current Principal Pushpaben and former students of the Gurukul. The auditorium built for dance, drama and music is called Saraswati Mandir, named after the Hindus goddess of knowledge.

[134] M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* (Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, 1938), p. 75-80; Judith Brown, *Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 91-92.

institutions of higher learning. Kasturbhai Lalbhai became the chairman of the Ahmedabad Education Society in 1936. The academic leadership of the society was under Anandshankar Dhruv, a retired pro-vice chancellor of Banaras Hindu University. Kasturbhai started the Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Arts College in 1937. He also gave money to build many other colleges and technical institutions in Ahmedabad.[135]

By the twentieth century there were Gujarati industrialists such as Kasturbhai and Mehta who promoted education for the betterment of the nation as a whole and not just their own caste. The world of the Gujarati trading castes expanded beyond their caste boundaries as they integrated themselves with the nationalist movement under Gandhi's leadership. Those industrialists who were involved in nationalist politics kept the nation in mind while choosing their philanthropic activities. Mercantile *dharma* during the nationalist era was a continuation from the pre-Gandhian days with merchants doing their duty and acting as leaders in their community (caste, religious or national) in order to enhance their social prominence and earn good *karma*.

Conclusion

Mercantile support for education started as a show of deference by trading communities to their reformist Rajput and British rulers. In this it was a continuation of the traditional practice of gift-giving to build a stronger relationship with the ruling class. The interdependent relationship between merchant and ruler during the pre-colonial era

[135] By 1962, half of the money donated to the Ahmedabad Education Society came from Kasturbhai Lalbhai. He played an advisory role during the early years of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM-A). Tripathi, *Dynamics of a Tradition*, p. 193-95.

carried on into colonial times with gift-giving changing to philanthropy. The political and financial powers in princely Gujarat belonged to different castes or religions. The Rajput rulers lived by a martial code of honor and the Vaishnav-Jain merchants adhered to non-violence. Despite these differing outlooks on life, the rulers and merchants continued to support each other. Important differences in *rajadharma* and mercantile *dharma* did not lead to a climate of constant conflict. Instead, rulers and merchants lived by rules where they could co-exist. As seen in the case of Gondal and Bhavnagar, rulers enacted policies favorable to the merchants; the trading castes returned this favor by supporting social reformist policies of English-educated Rajput princes.

By the twentieth century, *rajadharma* and mercantile ethos merged on social issues since both advocated promotion of modern education. Mercantile ethos expanded to include support for reformist activities as Western education became necessary for success in the modern commercial world. While merchants patronized schools and hospitals, they continued to donate generously to religious institutions. For merchants, secular and religious giving was intertwined. Since merchants were supporting educational institutions in their capacity as influential men of society, as leaders of their trading caste, most donations went to one's caste or religion based community. Yet, this community was not defined by political boundaries. Donations by Gujarati merchants transcended political boundaries between Princely and British India and between various princely states.

Members of the diaspora and nationalists went a step further and frequently crossed caste and communal boundaries while making charitable contributions. Even

though these men departed from the caste-based philanthropy of their predecessors, they continued to follow the mercantile code of conduct. Men such as Mehta sought to enhance their *abru* by supporting causes well received by society. Guarding one's *abru* still remained crucial for the trading castes as one's standing in the world of commerce and society was linked. Twentieth-century Gujarati society expected merchants to patronize schools in their capacity as leading members of society. Supporting modern education became a form of *seva* expected from influential men and women. Mehta also continued the interdependent relationship between merchants and rulers. By supporting the Congress Mehta threw his weight behind the new rulers of India. He showed deference to Congress by starting a nationalist school to raise young Indians. Gujarati merchants have retained their influential position in society by adapting their culture to the changes brought about by modernization, colonialism and nationalism.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Principal Savita Mehta (R)
Arya Kanya Gurukul, Porbandar

Figure 6.3 Courtesy of Arya Kanya Gurukul, Porbandar

Conclusion

In the previous chapters we have examined how and why Indian kings and queens adapted to the modern era. Those princes who enacted economic and social reforms in the second half of the nineteenth century did so in response to demands from elite groups within their states, whether they be merchants or the traditionally literate upper castes. Bhavnagar and Junagadh States started the Samaldas and Bahauddin Colleges respectively in response to internal demands. Starting new educational institutions were conscious decisions on the parts of rulers to ensure the loyalty of dominant sections of the state population. Many Indian kings were receptive to the demands of their state population and enacted policies accordingly. Princes promoted educational policies to enhance their monarchical authority. The fact that princes had the ability and desire to claim their sovereignty highlights the vitality of Indian kingship during the colonial era.

In addition to enhancing their sovereignty, princes also encouraged education to promote stability. Prince Bhagvatsinh started the Grasia College to help the feudal aristocracy. A liberal education would instill self-discipline and self-reliance in *grasias* and help them adapt to a world where they no longer had the resources to live a life of privilege and extravagance. Bhagvatsinh hoped that an educated landlord class would result in political stability. Just as the British believed that English-educated Indian princes would serve as a bulwark against anti-imperial sentiment, Bhagvatsinh expected his educated *grasias* to work in the interests of the state.

Princely states were also aware of socio-political conditions in neighboring British Indian provinces. With growing involvement of the peasantry in nationalist activities in British India, Bhagvatsinh, the ruler of a large agricultural population, strengthened his bond with the cultivators. By building village schools Bhagvatsinh made it possible for cultivators to gain a formal education and enter the professionalized administrative bureaucracy. With urban middle class Indian nationalists reaching out to the peasantry in colonial India, it was imperative that Bhagvatsinh strengthen his relations with the upper crust of the peasantry before they turn to the nationalists. Princes became reformers and modernizers to enhance their monarchical authority. Princely support for social reform and education was an attempt at guarding one's sovereignty and maintaining relevance in a changing world. Princes understood their new responsibilities in the framework of the traditional concept of *rajadharma*. Princely understanding of *rajadharma* expanded to include liberal policies such as supporting schools, colleges and modern medicine. While assuming new responsibilities, princes continued their traditional role of patronizing religious leaders and institutions, architecture, orphanages and animal welfare.

We see this continuity from the pre-colonial to colonial era in not just princely behavior but also in mercantile culture. It was (and is) a part of Gujarati mercantile culture to cultivate favorable relationships with the political power. My dissertation shows that while the Rajput rulers of Saurashtra lived by different ethical codes than their Vaishnav-Jain merchants, the relationship between the political and financial powers was more complementary than antagonistic. It was a part of mercantile ethos to display

loyalty towards one's ruler by supporting political and social causes important to the state administration. The pre-colonial practice of gift-giving continued during the colonial era with merchants supporting social projects important to their rulers. By doing so merchants continued to reproduce the culture of the ruling class. Promoting education and modern medicine did not mean that merchants gave up sponsoring religious shrines and leaders or animal hospices in case of Jains. The secular and the religious were intertwined for these men and women.

Though initially merchants supported formal education to cultivate a better relationship with their reformist rulers, over time, trading castes needed formal education in order to survive in the world of modern business. By early twentieth century, merchants sponsored educational institutions out of concern for their own caste or religious community. We see a sharing of values and priorities among the English-educated rulers, the traditionally literate upper castes, and the merchants, in that they all supported modern education. Social and economic reform in Gujarat was a multi-class project in which the various powerful segments of society participated. Change was not possible without the cooperation of elite members of society. Diwan Gaorishankar Oza of Bhavnagar could not have started the first girls' school without support from his caste brethren, the king and the queen, and the leading merchants of the city. The fact that Oza courted these three groups before he inaugurated the school shows us the power dynamics in mid-nineteenth century Saurashtra and the interdependent relationship between the state bureaucracy and the commercial communities. Out of this interdependent relationship was born a shared culture. I have shown how the traditionally

literate castes influenced the ruling class and merchants. Reformist middle class values adopted by Nagar Brahmans spread to Rajputs and Hindu, Muslim and Jain merchants. The aristocrat, Maharani Nandkunvarba of Gondal, encouraged women to become good wives and mothers. Much like her views on companionate marriage, Nandkunvarba's description of a woman's domestic duties was middle class. She encouraged women to become frugal, neat and pay attention to household matters. The industrialist Nanji Kalidas Mehta shared Nandkunvarba's reformist views and adopted them in his private life. Mehta also patronized an Arya Samaj-inspired girls' school. Nandkunvarba and Mehta's views show the influence of middle class reformers on aristocrats and merchant-industrialists.

Social reformers usually came from the traditionally literate castes as they were the ones most affected by colonial rule. In case of Gujarat it was Brahmans, especially Nagars, who first switched from Persian to English in order to continue their caste tradition of serving in the administrative bureaucracy. Elphinstone College-educated men such as Narmad and Karsandas Mulji came into contact with English reformist thought and Orientalist impressions of Hinduism and Indian history. In response to the colonial environment they aimed to reform their own castes and religion. While working under the influence of Western education they sought inspiration in an Orientalist image of ancient India to revive Hinduism. In this they were continuing a process already started by non-Western educated men such as Sahajanand Swami and Diwan Gaorishankar Oza who sought "true" Hinduism in the classical traditions. In the twentieth century, the industrialist Nanji Kalidas Mehta joined these men by starting a modern school for girls

in an Arya Samaj-influenced setting. In the Porbandar *gurukul* we see the culmination of social reformist beliefs for over a century that placed primacy on the Vedas and Sanskritized Hinduism. While earlier generations of upper caste reformers focused on their own castes, Mehta advocated teaching of upper caste Hinduism to lower castes. Mehta's goal was not just revival of his own caste, but the Indian nation.

This dissertation has been an attempt at historicizing princely states and connecting them to areas under direct British rule. Histories of colonial India need to further integrate princely states as the boundaries between British and Princely India were porous, allowing for the flow of peoples, goods, ideas and money. Through Mehta I have also brought in the Indian diaspora who maintained strong connections to the motherland. If Indian history is to be decolonized, we need to first look beyond political boundaries laid down by the imperial rulers. I would argue the same for histories of Gujarat that tend to focus on Ahmedabad and Surat, forgetting their interactions with Saurashtra. I have highlighted the continuities between the pre-colonial and colonial era. One can extend this project and stretch it to also include the post-independence period as the kingly culture is still very much alive in the political arena.

With the end of the British Empire in India, the princely states were quickly integrated into the independent nations of India and Pakistan. The last British Viceroy Lord Mountbatten, Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and V.P. Menon (Patel's chief aide) managed to convince most of the princes to agree to the merger of their territories with neighboring British Indian provinces. Various princely states of Saurashtra merged on February 15, 1948 to form the United States of Kathiawad. Sardar

Vallabhbhai Patel sworn in Lt. General His Highness Maharaja Jam Shri Digvijaysinh Ranjitsinh Jadeja, Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, as the *Rajpramukh* of Saurashtra.[1] Shri U.N. Dhebar became the Chief Minister of this new state whose name was later changed to the United States of Saurashtra. In 1956, Saurashtra lost its status as a separate political unit when it merged with Bombay State. On May 1st, 1960, with the division of Bombay State into Gujarat and Maharashtra, Saurashtra became a part of Gujarat state.

Out of sensitivity to princely honor, many princes were appointed by the independent government of India as *Rajpramukh* (Governor) or *Uprajpramukh* (Deputy Governor). The highest ranked Jadeja ruler in Gujarat, Jam Digvijaysinh of Nawanagar, became the Governor of the newly formed political unit called Saurashtra. Maharaja Krishnakumarsinh of Bhavnagar, another highly ranked ruler, became the Governor of Madras state in 1948. When it came to appointing princes, the independent government of India placed high importance on the ranking system used by their imperial predecessors. Hence, the Maharana of Udaipur due to his senior position among Rajputs was appointed as the *Maharajpramukh* for life. By examining the manner in which the Congress-led government mollified princes, we can see the continuation of the imperial honors system into the post-colonial era.[2]

Not all princes accepted Congress-appointed positions. Maharani Gayatri Devi of Jaipur contested the 1962 Parliamentary elections on a Swatantra party ticket. She won

[1] The Jam Saheb also served as the Governor of Madras and India's representative to the United Nations. William L. Richter, "Traditional Rulers in Post-Traditional Societies: The Princes of India and Pakistan," in *People, Princes and Paramount Power*, ed. Jeffrey, p. 334.

[2] V.P. Menon, *Integration of the India States* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1985, 1956 1st ed.).

the elections with the biggest margin, 175,000 more votes than the next candidate.[3] What is uniform is that princes and their descendants continue to run on Congress, BJP or regional party tickets in Indian elections, even in the twenty-first century.[4] Descendants of the former princes continue to play an influential role in Indian politics and society. The Indian political scene at the national and regional level is ripe with language and symbols associated with Indian kingship. More attention needs to be paid to this continuing presence of monarchical rituals and ideas in an Indian Republic.

[3] Allen and Dwivedi, *Lives of the Indian Princes*, p. 332-34.

[4] Richter, "Traditional Rulers in Post-Traditional Societies" in *People, Princes and Paramount Power*, ed. Jeffrey, p. 329-54; Ramusack, *Indian Princes and Their States*, p. 275-80.

Glossary

Abru	reputation; credit
Ahimsa	non-violence
Anjuman	voluntary association
Avatar	incarnation
Bahaarvatiyaa	outlaws
Bhagbatai	custom of collecting revenue in kind
Bhayat/bhayad	brotherhood; land holding junior members of the ruling family
Darbargadh	Royal Palace; literally means the home of the Darbar (ruler)
Dharma	moral duty; ethical code of conduct
Diwan	Prime Minister; Chief Minister
Farman	Imperial edict or order
Gadi	Royal throne
Grasia	feudal aristocracy
Gurukul	school
Hundi	letter of credit
Jamabandi	revenue
Jnati	sub-caste or sect
Jnati panchayat	caste council
Kali Yuga	Dark Age

Karbhari	State Officer
Madrasa	school for Islamic learning
Mahajan	an organization of merchants; a guild
Maharaj	religious leader of the Vallabhacharya sect
Maharaja	Great King, title used for Hindu rulers
Maharani	Great Queen, title used for Hindu rulers
Mulkgiri army	Maratha tax-collecting army
Nagarsheth	the leading merchant in the city; mayor of the city.
Nawab	Muslim princely ruler; Muslim aristocrat
Panjrapole	hospice for the care of sick and wounded animals; animal shelter
Peshkash	tribute
Poshak	ceremonial robe; the robe can be replaced by a monetary gift
Purdah	the custom of veiling and seclusion of women
Raj Ratna	State treasure
Raja	Hindu princely ruler (male)
Rajadharma	duties of a king
Rani	Hindu princely ruler (female)
Sanyasi	ascetic
Satsang	Hindu religious gathering
Satyagraha	Gandhi-led non-violent and civil disobedience movement
Seva	social and religious service

Sheth	a wealthy merchant; a prominent and well-respected individual, usually belonging to a trading community
Sipahi	soldier
Subahdar	Governor
Swadeshi	of one's country
Swami	Hindu religious leader
Ulama	Muslim theologians and religious teachers
Vazir	Prime Minister; Chief Minister
Vedshala	school to teach Vedas
Vighoti	cash payment of revenue
Zenana	women's quarters in a household
Zortalbi	an annual tribute collected by Junagadh state from princely states of Saurashtra

Bibliography

Government Records, Archival and Private Collections

A Life-Sketch of H.H. Sir Bhavsinhji II, K.C.S.I., Maharaja of Bhavnagar, 1913.

A Manual of Karbharis' Meeting of Kathiawar States, 1870-1940. Rajkot: G.K. Shingala Printing Press, 1940.

A Review of 25 Years' Administration of Gondal State. Bombay: The Times Press.

Adarsh Shikshan, Levels I-VI, 6 volumes. Gondal: Education Department, date unknown.

Administration Reports of Bhavnagar State, various years.

Administration Reports of Gondal State, various years.

Administration Reports of Junagadh State, various years.

Administration Reports of Kathiawar, various years.

Bahauddin College Daftar (GSA-J).

Charitable Endowment Funds taken over by the Government of Saurashtra from the Covenanting States and Estates. Jamnagar: Government of Saurashtra Press, 1951.

Education Department Records (MSA).

Foreign Department Records (NAI).

Foreign Department, Internal A Proceedings (NAI).

Foreign Department, Internal B Proceedings (NAI).

Foreign and Political Department Records (NAI).

Foreign and Political Department, General A Proceedings (NAI).

Foreign and Political Department, Internal Proceedings (NAI).

Forty Years of the Rajkumar College, Vols.1-6. Bhavnagar, 1911.

Harilal Savailal, *Samaldas Parmanandas*. Bombay: Tatva-Vivechaka Press, 1912.

Her Highness Nandkuverba, C.I., Rani Saheb, Gondal. Rajkot, date unknown.

India Princes as Their People See Them. An Inside View of the Administration of the State of Nawanagar of "Prince Ranji."

Installation of H.H. Bhagvat Sinh Jee, Thakore Saheb of Gondal. Bombay: Education Society's Press, Byculla, 1884.

Macaulay, Thomas Babington. "Minute on Education". From: Bureau of Education. *Selections from Educational Records, Part I (1781-1839).* Edited by H. Sharp. Calcutta: Superintendent, Government Printing, 1920. Reprint. Delhi: National Archives of India, 1965, 107-117.

Nawanagar and its Critics. Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1929.

Report on Native Newspapers, Bombay Presidency, various years (MSA).

Shree Bhagvat Sinhjee of Gondal. *The Spirit of Service or Public Utterances of Maharaja*. Gondal, 1935.

The Grasia College. Gondal: Gondal Darbari Press, 1899.

Tripathi, Mansukhram Suryaram. *Shreeman Gaorishankar Udayashankar Oza, CSI, Sankshipt Jivancharitra.* Bhavnagar, 1937.

Turkhud, M.A. *Report on the Progress of Education in Kathiawad during the year 1899-1900*. Rajkot, 1900.

Watson, J.W. *Statistical Account of Bhavnagar*. Bombay: Education Society's Press, 1883.

Western India States Agency Records (NAI).

Yagnik, Javerilal Umiashankar. *Gaorishankar Udayashankar*. Bhavnagar: 1937 second edition.

Newspapers and Journals

Bombay Gazette (Bombay)
Gujarat Monthly Journal (Bombay)
Gujarat Shalapatra (Ahmedabad)
Kathiawar Times (Rajkot)
Saurashtra Shikshak (Rajkot)
The Bombay Chronicle (Bombay)
The Times of India (Bombay)

Published Sources

Alam, Muzaffar. *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India: Awadh and the Punjab, 1707-1748*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Allen, Charles and Sharda Dwivedi. *Lives of the Indian Princes*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1984.

Amarji, Ranchodji. *Tarikh-i-Sorath: A History of the Provinces of Sorath and Halar in Kathiawad*. Bombay: Education Society Press and Thacker & Co., 1882.

Arnold, David. *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth Century India*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993.

Ashby, Eric. *Universities: British, Indian, African; A Study in the Ecology of Higher Education*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966.

Ashton, Stephen. *British Policy towards the Indian States 1905-1939*. London: Curzon Press, 1982.

Banerjee, Sumanta. "Marginalization of Women's Popular Culture in Nineteenth Century Bengal." In *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*, edited by Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid, 128-79. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999.

Basu, Aparna. "The Reformed Family, Women Reformers: A Case Study of Vidyagauri Nilkanth." *Samya Shakti: A Journal of Women's Studies* IV-V (1989-90): 62-82.

Bayly, Christopher A. *Rulers, Townsmen, and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

_____. *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Bhagavan, Manu. *Sovereign Spheres: Princes, Education and Empire in Colonial India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Bhagvat Sinh Jee, Thakore Saheb of Gondal. *Journal of a Visit to England in 1883*. Bombay: Education Society's Press, Byculla, 1886.

Birla, Ritu. *Stages of Capital: Law, Culture, and Market Governance in Late Colonial India*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.

Breckenridge, Carol A. and Peter van der Veer edited. *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.

Brown, Judith. *Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.

Burton, Antoinette. *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Chakravarti, Uma. "Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi? Orientalism, Nationalism and a Script for the Past." In *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*, edited by Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid, 27-87. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999.

Chandra, Sudhir. *The Oppressive Present: Literature and Social Consciousness in Colonial India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Chaudhuri K.N. *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660-1760*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

Cohn, Bernard. "Representing Authority in Victorian India." In *An Anthropologist Among the Historians and Other Essays*, 632-79. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Copland, Ian. *The British Raj and the Indian Princes: Paramountcy in Western India, 1857-1930*. New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1982.

_____. *The Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire 1917-1947*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Das Gupta, Ashin. *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat: c. 1700-1750*. Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1977.

Dave, H.L. *A Short History of Gondal*. Bombay: Education Society's Press, 1889.

Desai, Neera. *Social Change in Gujarat: A Study of Nineteenth Century Gujarati Society*. Bombay: Vora and Co., 1978.

Dirks, Nicholas. *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Dobbin, Christine. *Urban Leadership in Western India: Politics and Communities in Bombay City 1840-1855*. London: Oxford University Press, 1972.

Dodson, Michael. *Orientalism, Empire, and National Culture: India, 1770-1880*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Dutt, Romesh Chunder. *The Economic History of India, Vol. II*. Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India, 1960 reprint, original 1904.

Edwardes, S.M. *Ruling Princes of India: Junagadh*. Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1907.

_____. *Ruling Princes of India: Bhavnagar*. Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1909.

Fisher, Michael. *Indirect Rule in India: Residents and the Residency System, 1764-1858*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Forbes, Alexander. *Ras Mala*. London: Richardson and Company, 1878.

Forbes, Geraldine. *Women in Modern India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Gandhi, M.K. *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*. Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, 1938.

Gillion, Kenneth. *Ahmedabad: A Study in Indian Urban History*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968.

Gondal's Cherished Treasures: An Account of Shree Bhagvat Sinhjee Golden Jubilee Celebrations. Gondal: Shree Bhagvat Sinhjee Golden Jubilee Committee, 1934.

Gordon, Stewart. *The Marathas, 1600-1818*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

_____. *Marathas, Marauders, and State Formation in Eighteenth-Century India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Gregory, Robert G. *The Rise and Fall of Philanthropy in East Africa: The Asian Contribution*. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1992.

Grewal, J.S. *The Sikhs of the Punjab*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Hardiman, David. "The Structure of a 'Progressive' State." In *People, Princes and Paramount Power: Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States*, edited by Robin Jeffrey, 107-35. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978.

_____. *Peasant Nationalists of Gujarat: Kheda District 1917-1934*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Haynes, Douglas E. "From Tribute to Philanthropy: The Politics of Gift Giving in a Western Indian City." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46:2 (May 1987): 339-360.

_____. *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India: The Shaping of a Public Culture in Surat City, 1852-1928*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991.

Heimsath, Charles H. *Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Isaka, Riho. "Gujarati Intellectuals and History Writing in the Colonial Period." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37 (November 30, 2002): 4867-72.

_____. "Gujarati Elites and the Construction of a Regional Identity in the Late Nineteenth Century." In *Beyond Representation: Colonial and Postcolonial Constructions of Indian Identity*, edited by Crispin Bates, 151-76. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006.

_____. "Language and Dominance: The Debates over the Gujarati Language in the Late Nineteenth Century." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 25:1, 1-19.

Jani, S.V. *Saurashtra no Itihas*. Ahmedabad: Darshak Itihas Nidhi, 2003.

Jeffrey, Robin. *The Decline of Nayar Dominance: Society and Politics in Travancore, 1847-1908***.** New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1976.

_____. Edited. *People, Princes and Paramount Power: Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Jones, Kenneth W. *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in Nineteenth Century Punjab*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.

_____. *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Jordens, J.T.F. *Dayanand Saraswati: His Life and Ideas*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Kapadia, Aparna. "Alexander Forbes and the Making of a Regional History," in *The Idea of Gujarat: History, Ethnography and Text*, edited by Edward Simpson and Aparna Kapadia, 50-65. New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2010.

Karaka, Dosabhai Framji. *History of the Parsis, Including Their Manners, Customs, Religion and Present Position*. 2 Volumes. London: Macmillan, 1884.

Khachar, Pradyuman. *Sorathni Vidyapith Bahauddin College*. Junagadh, 2002.

Khan, Nasrullah. *The Ruling Chiefs of Western India and the Rajkumar College*. Bombay: Thacker, 1898.

Kincaid, C.A. *The Outlaws of Kathiawar and Other States*. Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1905.

Kishwar, Madhu. "Arya Samaj and Women's Education: Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Jalandhar." *Economic and Political Weekly* 21:17 (April 26, 1986): 9-24.

Kooiman, Dick. *Communalism and Indian Princely States: Travancore, Baroda and Hyderabad in the 1930s*. Delhi: Manohar, 2002.

Kopf, David. *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The Dynamics of Indian Modernization, 1773-1835*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.

_____. *The Brahmo Samaj and the Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

Korat, P.G., S.V. Jani, and J.D. Bhal edited. *Bhavnagar Rajyano Itihas*. Ahmedabad: Pashrav Prakashan, 1995.

Lahiri, Shompa. *Indians in Britain: Anglo-Indian Encounters, Race and Identity 1880-1930*. London: Frank Cass, 2000.

Lambert-Hurley, Siobhan. *Muslim Women, Reform and Princely Patronage*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Lelyveld, David. *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978.

Lutgendorf, Philip. "Ram's Story in Shiva's City: Public Arenas and Private Patronage." In *Culture and Power in Banaras: Community, Performance, and Environment, 1800-1980,* edited by Sandria B. Freitag, 34-61. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1989.

Malabari, Behramji. *Gujarat and the Gujaratis: Pictures of Men and Manners taken from Life*. Bombay: Education Society's Press, 1884, 2nd ed.

Manek, Kalpa. *Itivrutt: Aitihasik Lekhak Sangrah*. Gujarat Sahitya Academy, 2003.

Mani, Lata. "Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India." In *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*, edited by Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid, 88-126. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999.

Manor, James. *Political Change in an Indian State: Mysore 1917-1955.* New Delhi: Manohar, 1977.

Marshall, P.J. *Bengal: The British Bridgehead – Eastern India, 1740-1828*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Mcleod, John. *Sovereignty, Power, Control: Politics in the States of Western India, 1916-1947*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1999.

Mehta, K.V. *Gaurishankar Udaishankar Oza, emnu Jivan Charitra*. Bombay: Times of India Press, 1903.

Mehta, Makrand. "Gujarati Business Communities in East African Diaspora: Major Historical Trends." *Economic and Political Weekly* 36:20 (May 19-25, 2001): 1738-47.

_____. "Gandhi and Ahmedabad, 1915-20." *Economic and Political Weekly* 40:4 (Jan 22-28, 2005): 291-99.

_____. "Institution Building and Social Change in Western India: A Case Study of Vanita Vishram, Surat, 1907-1920." In *Visibilising Women: Facets of History through a Gender Lens*, edited by Kirit K. Shah and Radhika Seshan, 115-22. Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2005.

Mehta, Nanji Kalidas. *Dream Half-Expressed*. Porbandar, 1966.

Mehta, Shirin. "The Mahajans and the Business Communities of Ahmedabad." In *Business Communities of India: A Historical Perspective*, edited by Dwijendra Tripathi, 173-84. Ahmedabad: Manohar, 1984.

_____. "Women's Journalism in Gujarati: A Study in Expression of Gender Perception, 1850-1920." In *Visibilising Women: Facets of History through a Gender Lens*, edited by Kirit K. Shah and Radhika Seshan, 85-101. Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2005.

Mehta, S.S. *A Biographical Sketch of Vijayshanker Gaorishanker Oza*. Bhavnagar, 1935.

Menon, V.P. *Integration of the India States*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1985, 1956 1st edition.

Metcalf, Barbara. *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982.

Metcalf, Thomas R. *The Aftermath of the Revolt*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964.

_____. *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.

_____. *Ideologies of the Raj*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Miller, Barbara Stoler edited. *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Minault, Gail. *Secluded Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India.* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Misra, S.C. *Muslim Communities in Gujarat*. London: Asia Publishing House, 1964.

Mody, Cooverjee Rustomjee. *Essay on Female Infanticide*. Bombay: Bombay Education Society's Press, 1849.

Nadri, Ghulam A. *Eighteenth-Century Gujarat: The Dynamics of a Political Economy, 1750-1800*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009.

Nair, Janaki. *Miners and Millhands: Work, Culture, and Politics in Princely Mysore*. London: Sage, 1998.

Naoroji, Dadabhai. *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*. Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India, 1962 reprint, original 1901.

Nightingale, Pamela. *Trade and Empire in Western India, 1784-1806*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

O'Hanlon, Rosalind. *A Comparison Between Women and Men: Tarabai Shinde and the Critique of Gender Relations in Colonial India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Panikkar, K.M. *Indian States and the Government of India*. London, 1930.

Pearson, Michael N. *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976.

_____. *The Indian Ocean*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.

Pocock, David. *Kanbi and Patidar*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1972.

Prakash, Om. *European Commercial Enterprise in Pre-colonial India*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Price, Pamela G. *Kingship and Political Practice in Colonial India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Rai, Mridu. *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Rights, and the History of Kashmir*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Ramabai Saraswati, Pandita. *The High Caste Hindu Woman*. Philadelphia, 1888.

Ramusack, Barbara N. *The Princes of India in the Twilight of Empire: Dissolution of a Patron Client System, 1914-1939*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1978.

_____. "Punjab States: Maharajas and Gurdwaras: Patiala and the Sikh Community." In *People, Princes and Paramount Power: Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States*, edited by Robin Jeffrey, 170-204. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978.

_____. *The Indian Princes and their States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Raval, R.L. *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in Gujarat During the Nineteenth Century*. New Delhi: Ess Ess Publications, 1987.

Renold, Leah. *A Hindu Education: Early Years of the Banaras Hindu University*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Richter, William L. "Traditional Rulers in Post-Traditional Societies: The Princes of India and Pakistan." In *People, Princes and Paramount Power: Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States*, edited by Robin Jeffrey, 329-54. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Rocher, Rosane. "British Orientalism in the Eighteenth Century." In *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, edited by Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer, 215-49. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.

Rudner, David. *Caste and Capitalism in Colonial India: The Nattukottai Chettiars*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994.

Sangari, Kumkum and Sudesh Vaid edited. *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999.

Satashiya, Parul A. *Itihas Madhu*. Gujarat Sahitya Academy, 2006.

Sen, Satadru. "The Politics of Deracination: Empire, Education and Elite Children in Colonial India." *Studies in History* 19:1 (2003): 19-39.

_____. *Migrant Races: Empire, Identity and K.S. Ranjitsinhji*. New York: Manchester University Press, 2004.

Sethia, Tara. "Berar and the Nizam's State Railway: Politics of British Interests in Hyderabad State, 1853-1883." *Indo-British Review* 15:2 (1988): 59-78.

Shah, Kirit K. and Radhika Seshan edited. *Visibilising Women: Facets of History through a Gender Lens*. Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2005.

Shah, Kunjalata. "Gender Perceptions in the Sundari Subodh, the Popular Women's Journal in Gujarati, 1903-1923." In *Visibilising Women: Facets of History through a Gender Lens*, edited by Kirit K. Shah and Radhika Seshan, 103-13. Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2005.

Shoddhan, Amrita. “Women in the Maharaj Libel Case: A Reexamination.” *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 4:2 (1997): 123-39.

_____. *A Question of Community: Religious Groups and Colonial Law*. Calcutta: Samya, 2001.

Shukla, Sonal. “Cultivating Minds: Nineteenth Century Gujarati Women’s Journals.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 26 (October 26, 1991): 63-66.

Singh, St. Nihal. *Shree Bhagvat Sinhjee: The Maker of Modern Gondal*. Gondal: Golden Jubilee Committee, 1934.

Spodek, Howard. “On the Origins of Gandhi’s Political Methodology: The Heritage of Kathiawad and Gujarat.” *Journal of Asian Studies* (Feb 1971): 361-72.

_____. *Urban-Rural Integration in Regional Development: A Case Study of Saurashtra, India, 1800-1960*. The University of Chicago: Department of Geography, 1976.

Stark, Ulrike. *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India*. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007.

Stern, Robert. *The Cat and the Lion: Jaipur State in the British Raj*. Leiden: Brill, 1988.

Stokes, Eric. *The English Utilitarians and India*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959.

_____. *The Peasant Armed: The Indian Revolt of 1857*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

Subramaniam, Lakshmi. *Indigenous Capital and Imperial Expansion: Bombay, Surat, and the West Coast*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Tambs-Lyche, Harald. *Power, Profit and Poetry: Traditional Society in Kathiawar, Western India*. New Delhi: Manohar, 1997.

Thakkar, Usha. “Puppets on the Periphery: Women and Social Reform in Nineteenth Century Gujarat.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 32:1-2 (Jan 4-11, 1997): 46-52.

Timberg, Thomas. *The Marwaris: From Traders to Industrialists*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978.

Tirmizi, S.A.I. “Muslim Merchants of Medieval Gujarat.” In *Business Communities of India: A Historical Perspective*, edited by Dwijendra Tripathi, 59-68. Ahmedabad: Manohar, 1984.

Toothi, N.A. *The Vaishnavas of Gujarat: Being a Study in Methods of Investigation of Social Phenomena*. Calcutta and New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1935.

Tripathi, Dwijendra. *The Dynamics of a Tradition: Kasturbhai Lalbhai and his Entrepreneurship*. New Delhi: Manohar: 1981.

_____. And Makrand Mehta, *Business Houses in Western India: A Study in Entrepreneurial Response, 1850-1956*. Ahmedabad: Indian Institute of Management, 1981.

_____. And Makrand Mehta. "Class Character of the Gujarati Business Community." In *Business Communities of India: A Historical Perspective*, edited by Dwijendra Tripathi, 151-72. Ahmedabad: Manohar, 1984.

_____. Edited. *Business Communities of India: A Historical Perspective.* Ahmedabad: Manohar, 1984.

Tripathi, Govardhanram Madhavram. *The Classical Poets of Gujarat.* Bombay: Forbes Gujarati Sabha, third edition, 1958, original 1894.

Van der Veer, Peter. "The Foreign Hand." In *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, edited by Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer, 23-44. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.

White, David L. "Parsis in the Commercial World of Western India, 1700-1750." *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 24 (1987): 183-203.

Wilberforce-Bell, H. *History of Kathiawad*. New Delhi: Ajay Book Service, 1980. London: Heinemann, 1916.

Williams, Raymond B. *An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hinduism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Wilson, John. *History of the Suppression of Infanticide in Western India*. Bombay: Smith, Taylor and Co, 1855.

Wink, Andre. *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth-Century Maratha Swarajya.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Wood, John. "Indian Nationalism in the Princely Context: The Rajkot Satyagraha of 1938-39." In *People, Princes and Paramount Power: Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States*, edited by Robin Jeffrey, 240-74. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Yagnik, Achyut and Suchitra Sheth. *The Making of Modern Gujarat: Plurality, Hindutva and Beyond*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2005.

Zutshi, Chitralekha. *Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Vita

Aarti Bhalodia-Dhanani is from Gujarat, India and Texas. She obtained her ICSE degree from Shantilal Nathalal Kansagra School, Rajkot, in 1997 and her ISC degree from Mayo College Girls' School in Ajmer, Rajasthan, in 1999. After graduating from high school she started her undergraduate education at Rice University, Houston and received the degree of Bachelor of Arts, with a major in Economics, in May 2003. She earned her Master of Arts in History in December 2006 from the University of Texas at Austin. While pursuing her M.A. and Ph.D. in history she has worked as a graduate student instructor at UT. She has received the Dora Bonham Recruitment Fellowship, the Dora Bonham Research and Travel Grant, and the History Department Graduate Fellowship. She has also received a writing fellowship from the Institute of Historical Studies at UT. She served as a member of the organization committee for the Texas Asia Conference hosted by the Department of Asian Studies at UT. She has presented her research at the 38th Annual Conference on South Asia at Madison, the 3rd Biennial Gujarat Studies Association Conference at SOAS, London, and the Women Faculty Research Day at Tulane. She is currently teaching Indian history at Tulane University, New Orleans. She can be reached via email: bhalodia@utexas.edu.

This manuscript was typed by the author.